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The Story of an Escape From
the Massacre at Goliad.

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THE STORY OF AN ESCAPE
FROM
THE MASSACRE AT GOLIAD

By J. C. DUVAL



And an Extract from a Sketch of
JOHN CRITTENDEN DUVAL
"THE LAST SURVIVOR OF THE GOLIAD MASSACRE"

By
WILLIAM CORNER



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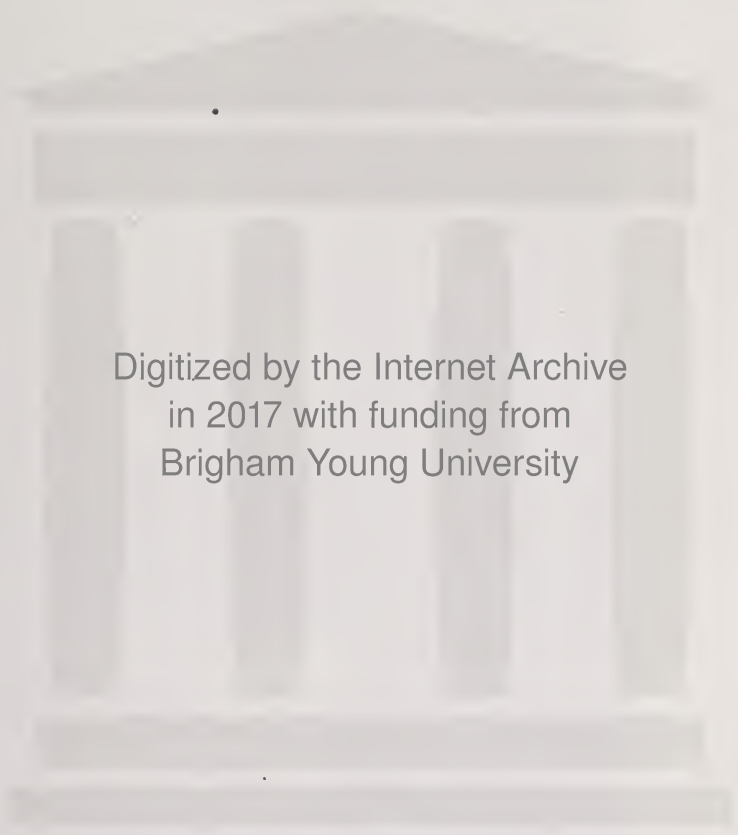


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JOHN CRITTENDEN DUVAL

The following is an extract from a sketch of:

John Crittenden Duval: The Last Survivor of the Goliad Massacre

By WILLIAM CORNER

In the Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association.

July, 1897

The following is a copy of a letter written by Burr H. Duval (brother of J. C. Duval) to his father, William P. Duval, Governor of Florida, dated March 9th, 1836, eighteen days prior to his death at the Goliad Massacre, March 27th, 1836. This copy is verbatim et literatim. The original is written on cream-laid quarto letter-fly. The edges of the sheet indicate that the paper is hand-made. The handwriting is good, firm, and neat.

"Goliad, March, 9th, 1836.

Dear Father:

It has been some time since I have had an opportunity of writing to you. A gentleman leaves here today for the United States but have my doubts if he gets fifty miles from his post as we are surrounded by Mexican troops. By last express, yesterday, from San Antonio, we learned that their (our*) little band of 200 still maintained their situation in the Alamo, the fort outside of the town. They have been fighting desperately there for 10 or 15 days against four or five thousand Mexicans. Santa Anna is there himself and has there and in this vicinity at least six thousand troops. Contrary to the expectation of every one he has invaded the Country when least expected. Not a Texan was in the field, nor has even one yet made his appearance at this post. The greater portion of the Mexican troops are mounted, and of course have greatly the advantage over us. We now muster at this post 400 strong, and from the preparations we have made shall be enabled to give any number a desperate fight. San Antonio I fear has fallen before this:—from its situation and construction, I cannot believe it possible so small a band could maintain it against such fearful odds—D. Crockett is one of the number in the fort. We are expecting an attack hourly. An express yesterday was chased in by 200 cavalry eighteen miles from this. Sixty miles south of this is another party of 650 who have been quartered at San Patricio for some days, waiting reinforcements. Several of our parties of 20 and 30 have been cut off by them. As I anticipated, much dissention prevails among the Volunteers. Col. Fannin, now in command (Genl. Houston being absent), is unpopular,—and nothing but the certainty of hard fighting, and that

* "Our" is written over "their."

shortly, could have kept us together so long. I am popular with the army, and strange as you may think it could lead them or the majority of them where I choose. They have offered to give me every office from a Majority to Commander in Chief. I have seen enough to desire no office for the present in Texas higher than the one I hold. I have fifty men in my Company, who love me and who cannot be surpassed for boldness and chivalry. With such a band I will gain the laurels I may wear or die without any. I am situated at present with my company, in a strong stone house immediately across the street and opposite one of the bastions of the fort—from the bastion I have built a Bridge to the top of the house on which is placed a Brass Six Pounder—the best and most commanding situation we have—before I am driven from it hundreds must perish. I have seen something of the country since I last wrote you, having been out for some days at a time on several expeditions. It is decidedly a richer country than I expected to find, and must be more healthy than any other southern country—at least this part of it—the country is high and dry tho generally level and the rivers, at least this, the San Antonio, descends with the velocity of a mountain stream. In many parts water and timber is too scarce, and the Northern winds are frequent and last from one to three days blowing with great violence. The climate of Florida I think is greatly preferable, but it can not be compared to this in point of soil. We have just learned from Washington (the seat of Government) that they have declared Independence. If such be the fact, of which I have no doubt—we must whip the Mexicans. For young men who wish to acquire distinction and fortune, now is the time. Tell all who are friendly to the cause of Texas to lend a helping hand and that quickly. The little band of Volunteers now in the field must breast the storm and keep a powerful army in check until relief is at hand or all is lost. We want provisions, arms and men. I have never seen such men as this army is composed of—no man ever thinks of retreat, or surrender—they must be exterminated to be whipped. Nothing can depress their ardour. We are frequently for days without anything but Bull beef to eat, and after working hard all day, could you at night hear the boys crowing, gobling, barking, bellowing, laughing and singing, you would think them the happiest and best fed men in the world.

Do all you can for Texas.

Your affectionate son,

B. H. Duval.”

Ten days after that letter was written, a finger of the hand that penned it was shot away by a Mexican bullet, and Captain Duval had heard at the Battle of Coleto (in the words of his brother) “Bullets singing like mad hornets around” him. Eighteen days after, the writer was dead, lying amidst “the pallid upturned faces of his

murdered companions." In the meantime, he had learned that human hope is oftentimes dust and ashes, that human trust is a broken reed, that man may gain laurels, as he did, and die in the winning, and that there is a limit to the bravest man's endurance.

J. C. Duval* possessed a natural gift for description. His love of nature made him observant of all that pertained to wood-craft and the prairie. Bird, beast, flower and tree were alike full of interest for him. His observations of them are always as those of one familiar with his subject. He wrote of these things and of his adventures, not as the artist; he knew little of the technique of the art of writing, or of the artistic construction of stories. What he had to say flowed naturally from his pen in a style his very own. What he wrote commands immediate attention, it has a living and direct quality; especially this is so of "Early Times in Texas." To pick up that means to read it before it is put down. No book of this kind, except "Robinson Crusoe," has charmed me so much. I have read and re-read it many times, and always with renewed interest. I have gone very carefully over it and journalized by their actual dates the different events he describes and the progress of his retreat eastward after his escape. I have done this partly for historical interest and partly to show that he was accurate. A lapse of memory, here and there, is all I can detect with careful searching.

Besides "Early Times in Texas," Mr. Duval wrote "The Young Explorers; or a Continuation of the Adventures of Jack Dobell," a characteristic volume, "The Adventures of Big Foot Wallace," and many other fugitive papers contributed to local magazines and to the press.

Duval and Wallace were life-long friends. Both of them had had brothers killed in that fearful Goliad slaughter and they were for a long time comrades.

John Duval was of medium build, erect and active to old age. At rest his face wore a look of calm and native dignity. A fine, knightly face, with a regular grey beard and determined mouth. He had a high, broad forehead and intelligent blue eyes. The extreme modesty and diffidence he exhibited would have been an affection in most men; with him it was one of the charms of his character, for with all of it there was an undefined force that gave assurance that his quiescent nature, like that of a lion, could, upon occasion, be aroused to a wonderful self-possession and alertness in the presence of danger.

Such, then, in short, was the man whom fate had decreed should outlive all his fellow-actors in that sad drama of La Bahia. Well, he was a noble representative of brave comrades. It was a solemn office he filled for a short space of time, the sole and worthy in-

* J. C. Duval was an uncle of Hon. Duval West of San Antonio.

cumbent—an ambassador from the past to an all too heedless new generation. Who shall declare that his election to that office was not made sure by the silent ballot of a dead constituency? I can fancy him true to himself, true to a life-long habit, deprecating even that as too much honor. I can picture him an old soldier standing alone, patiently waiting for the grim adjutant to call the last name of his company's muster-roll. In his loneliness he must often have called to mind "the old familiar faces"—no doubt communed with them, even as another grand old man.

THE STORY OF AN ESCAPE
FROM
THE MASSACRE AT GOLIAD

Reprint from
"EARLY TIMES IN TEXAS"
By J. C. DUVAL

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PREFACE.

Several of my young friends here who have read a little book I published many years ago, entitled "The Adventures of Big Foot Wallace," and were pleased with it, have requested me to write another and tell them whatever I thought would interest them about early times in Texas. In reply I stated to my young friends that I had lived the greater portion of my life on the frontiers, where opportunities for learning and improvement in a literary way, were as few and far between as the settlements, and consequently I did not think I was capable of writing a book that would interest them like those of Mayne Reid and many other popular authors of Juvenile works. But my young friends said that boys didn't care much for style or literary merit, that all they wanted was a truthful account of scenes and incidents that had actually occurred, not fictitious ones that never had an existence except in the imagination of the author.

Since then I have come to the conclusion that my young friends were probably right in saying that a boy would be more interested in a story he believed to be true, although badly told, than he would be in one he knew was fictitious, even if it were faultless as a literary production. I have therefore determined to comply with their request and write them as good a book as I can about early times in Texas (which is all they can reasonably expect). I candidly admit that the many defects and crudities of the book, have had but little weight with me in determining the question of its publication. Any expectation I may have had of its favorable reception, is based solely upon the fact that the "old Texans" have always shown a liberality towards, and a willingness to favor, as far as they could, every one who came to their aid when they were struggling for life and a free government against a merciless foe—and I have every reason to believe that the descendants of these old pioneers are true "chips of the old blocks," only perhaps a little more polished, owing to the advantages they have had in the way of education, etc. If the saying be a true one that "Republics are ungrateful," then has Texas been a most notable exception to the general rule, for her liberality towards all who served her in her time of need (however unimportant the service may have been) has been unparalleled in the history of nations.

As I am fully aware the only claim this book has to patronage is that the scenes and incidents described therein are not fictitious, I lay great stress upon the fact that all I have stated in regard to

my own adventures is strictly true. I can say this unhesitatingly, for the narrative was compiled from memorandums written shortly after my escape from Goliad, when everything was fresh in my memory. The scenes and incidents described in the second part of the book entitled "The Young Explorers" are also true though not occurring just as stated, for I have connected them together in a continuous narrative (in which several fictitious characters have been introduced), because I thought they would be more likely to interest a reader in that form than they would if told in disconnected fragments.

The frontiersmen or backwoodsmen as a class, like the flat-boatmen of the Mississippi, must soon become extinct, for the day is fast approaching when there will be no frontiers or backwoods within the present boundaries of the United States. Their mission will have been accomplished, and that such a class ever existed in our country, will be known to future generations only through vague tradition, or because a few individuals among them, such as Daniel Boone or Kit Carson, have been prominent enough to entitle them to a passing notice in history. I have endeavored as far as I could to give the reader a correct idea of this unique class now rapidly becoming extinct, and of the peculiar state of affairs that existed in Texas at an early day; and for that reason I hope this book will not be altogether without interest to those who have known Texas only as it is now, or was for a few years past.

It is due to our colored citizens to say, that in depicting the character of Cudjo, I had no intention whatever to ridicule or cast a slur upon them. I have merely attempted to describe a type of the race common amongst them in antebellum days, and which in all probability would have been as common among any other race of people, if like them they had been for so long a time subjected to the demoralizing influences of ignorance and a degrading servitude. Now that they have been liberated "by the arbitrament of the sword," and can avail themselves of all their rights as free citizens of our common country, I hope (and believe from the advances they have already made) that the time will soon come when they will place themselves upon a level with those who enjoyed all the advantages of freedom whilst they were in a state of slavery.

With this explanation of the whys and wherefores, I launch my little cranky craft on the vast and uncertain ocean of "literary ventures," hoping its favorable reception by my young friends in Texas, will waft it into the haven of success alongside of many a more lofty and pretentious bark.

THE AUTHOR.

Early Times in Texas, or the Adventures of Jack Dobell.

CHAPTER I.

IN 1835 the people of Texas, or rather the settlers from the "States," determined to throw off the Mexican yoke, and resist to the last extremity any further encroachment upon their liberties. At that time, with the exception of Mexicans and Indians, there was probably not more than twenty thousand people in the colonies, and although the Mexican government for several years previously had shown a disposition to ignore the rights and privileges guaranteed them under the Constitution of 1824, I hardly think the colonists with their limited means and numbers would have ventured to rebel against its authority, if they had not counted largely on getting all the aid they should need to carry out the revolution successfully, from their friends and brethren in the United States. In this expectation they were not disappointed. Many young men, from almost every State in the Union, armed and equipped at their own expense, hastened to the assistance of the colonists, as soon as the standard of rebellion was raised.

A volunteer company was organized for this purpose in my native village, and although I was scarcely old enough to bear arms, I resolved to join it. But it was no aspiration for "military fame" that induced me to do so. One of the frequent visitors at my father's house was an old friend of his, who had been in Texas and traveled over a considerable portion of it, and who subsequently held a position in the cabinet of the first president. He was enthusiastic in his praise of the country, and insensibly an ardent longing sprang up in my bosom to see for myself the "broad prairies," the beautiful streams and vast herds of buffalo and wild horses of which he had so often given me glowing descriptions. By joining this company I thought an opportunity would be afforded me of gratifying it which perhaps might never again offer itself, and so, in spite of the opposition of relatives and friends, my name was added to the muster roll.

I purchased a good Kentucky rifle (with the use of which I was already well acquainted), shot pouch, powder horn, tomahawk, and butcher knife, and thus equipped, with my knapsack on my shoulders, I fell into ranks, and amid the waving of handkerchiefs and the cheering of bystanders I bid adieu to my native village and started for the "promised land" of Texas.

It was the latter part of November when we left B—, and though not very cold, the snow was some three or four inches deep

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on the ground, which retarded our march so much that we only made about twenty miles by sunset, when we halted for the night in a grove near the margin of a stream that empties into the famous "Salt River." We cleared away the snow from under the trees, built up log heaps for fires, and after eating our supper of hot coffee, "hard tack" and fried middling, for which our tramp had given us excellent appetites, we spread our blankets upon the fallen leaves and turned in for the night.

The next morning we were on the road by sunrise, and about dusk, after a toilsome and fatiguing march through the slush and mud (for a thaw had set in) we reached the city of Louisville and took up our quarters at the Galt House. The next day we purchased a supply of provisions—enough to last us for the voyage—and went on board of a steamer bound for New Orleans.

Nothing worthy of note occurred on the passage. Occasionally, by way of varying the monotony of our daily life, we would go ashore when the boat landed for wood or freight, and get up an impromptu "shooting match," in which the skill of our Kentucky riflemen was exhibited, greatly to the astonishment of the "natives." It was no unusual thing for many of them to put three balls out of five, at the distance of one hundred yards, into a paper not larger than a silver dollar.

The second day of the voyage we left the snow and ice behind us, and on the fourth we came to the region of "Spanish moss." The trees on both banks of the river were draped in its long funereal folds, which waving slowly back and forth in the breeze, was too suggestive of any but cheerful thoughts. The next day we came to the "coast," a strip of country so called, extending along the river for more than a hundred miles above the city of New Orleans. It is protected from overflow (though not entirely) by what are termed "levees," or embankments, thrown up on each side of the river, a few paces back from the margin, but these are sometimes broken through in very high stages of water. The river was unusually full at the time we passed, and in one place we noticed where the water had made a breach in the embankment more than a hundred feet in width, through which it was rushing with the velocity of a mill race, and had already inundated the coast country on that side as far as the eye could extend.

From the time we struck the "coast" we experienced no more cold weather. Everywhere the forests were still green, and the orange and pomegranate were bending down with the weight of their ripened fruit. Here, too, we first observed extensive fields of cotton and sugar cane, in the former of which gangs of negroes were seen, bearing huge baskets filled with the "snowy fleece" upon their wooly heads.

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The fifth day, we reached New Orleans, fortunately just in time to secure a passage on a schooner that was to sail the next day for Velasco, a small port at the mouth of the Brazos river. The following day, before the schooner was ready to sail, I had an opportunity to see the city, of which I was glad to avail myself. The great number of vessels moored in a long line to the wharves, the puffing of steamboats, the clatter of drays and carts, the noise and bustle on the levee, and the jargon of foreign tongues were all calculated to fill with astonishment and wonder the mind of a youth who had never before been beyond the precincts of his native village.

In the evening we embarked with all our goods and chattels on the schooner, and having made fast to a tow-boat, in company with two ships and a bark, we were soon under way, and bade farewell to the "Crescent City," and its forests of masts and tapering spires quickly faded away in the distance.

From New Orleans to the mouth of the Mississippi the scenery along the river is monotonous and dreary. Low swampy lands extended back in an unbroken level as far as we could see, in some places entirely covered with water and in others with a rank, luxuriant growth of reeds and coarse grass, among which cranes and many other aquatic birds could be seen silently standing in rows, or stalking solemnly about in search of the reptiles with which these marshes abounded. Along the shores immense piles of drift wood were heaped up, amongst which, and scarcely to be distinguished from the decayed logs composing them, the black scaly sides of an alligator could now and then be seen, to be saluted whenever within range, by a shower of bullets from our rifles.

The Mississippi empties into the gulf by three mouths and about 10 o'clock the day after we had left New Orleans, we entered the one called the "Southwest Pass" and an hour or so afterwards we had crossed the "bar" and were rolling and tossing upon the blue waves of the gulf of Mexico. The line was cast off from the tow-boat, sails hoisted and soon we were scudding along before a fair wind in the direction of the distant shores of Texas. For a long way out we noticed that the blue waters of the gulf refused to "fraternize" with the vast muddy stream continually pouring in from the mouths of the Mississippi.

In a few hours we lost sight of the low shores of Louisiana, and nothing was to be seen but the sky and the apparently interminable waste of blue water. Our schooner was a small one, and with more than fifty passengers on board, it can easily be imagined we were packed rather too closely together for comfort. For my share of the sleeping accommodations, I appropriated a large coil of chain cable, in the hollow of which by doubling up after the fashion of a jack knife, I managed to snooze pretty comfortably at night.

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CHAPTER II.

THE second day of our voyage about sunset, we observed a black cloud towards the north, which spreading rapidly soon obscured the whole heavens. Sails were hauled down and reefed, the hatches secured, and every precaution taken for the safety of the vessel in the approaching "norther"—one of those fierce winds that frequently occur during the winter season in the gulf of Mexico, as well as on the prairies of Texas. We had scarcely made "all snug" when the norther struck the schooner with unusual violence, carrying away our maintop mast, and forcing the vessel almost upon her beam ends. She soon righted however, and away we flew before the blast that whistled and shrieked through the cordage in a way not at all pleasant and enlivening to the ears of a landsman. In a little while the waves began to rise and the vessel to toss and pitch like an unbroken mustang, and feeling some of the premonitory symptoms of sea sickness, such as a frantic effort to throw up my boots, I retired to my coil of cable below; but the tossing of the schooner, the rushing of the waves along side and the tramping of sailors on deck effectually drove away sleep.

The next morning the storm had abated, the sun shone out clear and warm, and from that time until we reached Velasco we had no more bad weather. Whilst the storm lasted, a number of flying fish fell upon the deck of the schooner, which the sailors secured, and we found them to be an agreeable addition to our ordinary fare of sea biscuit and "salt junk." They are a delicate little fish, from six to eight inches in length with two long fins resembling wings projecting from the upper portion of the body. When chased by the dolphin or other large fish, they may be seen rising in schools from the tops of the waves, and flying forty or fifty yards in the direction of the wind; then dipping again into the crests of the billows, from which they quickly rise for another flight, should their enemies still continue to pursue them. Their flight rarely exceeds forty or fifty yards, for the reason that their fins cannot serve the purpose of wings unless frequently moistened by contact with the water.

On the morning of the seventh day after leaving Southwest Pass, the shores of Texas were dimly discernible from the masthead, looking like a long low cloud on the western horizon. The wind was "dead ahead" and we were nearly the whole day beating up within sight of the beach and the few miserable little shanties that then constituted the city of Velasco. Finding it was impossible to cross the bar with the wind ahead, we cast anchor in the roadstead, hoping it would be more favorable the next day. But the next morning it was still from the same quarter, and tired out with our confinement on board of the vessel a dozen of us manned the long

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boat, resolved to make a landing in spite of "wind and weather." But in this we "reckoned without our host," for we missed the channel, got into the breakers which came very near swamping our boat, and we were glad to make our escape from them back to the schooner again. Two years subsequently I saw a boat capsize amongst those same breakers, and although in full view of many people on shore, every one on board of her was drowned before any assistance could be given them.

Not long after our return to the schooner, to our great joy the wind hauled around to the east, which enabled us to cross the bar, and soon we were safely anchored in the mouth of the Brazos river. The country in the immediate vicinity of Velasco is low, and back of it a dead level prairie extended as far as the eye could reach; consequently I must confess I was not much pleased with the first view of the "promised land." Velasco was a miserable little village consisting of two stores and a hotel, so called, and five or six grog shops, dignified with the name of "saloons." Opposite to it, on the south bank of the river was the rival city of Quintana, containing about the same number of shanties and a mixed population of Yankees, Mexicans and Indians.

We landed upon the Quintana side and pitched our camps upon the beach, adjoining the camps of several other companies that had arrived a few days previously. Here we remained two weeks or more, and as we were liberally supplied with rations by the patriotic firm of McKinney & Williams, and game and fish were to be had in abundance, we "fared sumptuously" every day. In hunting and fishing, making tents, cleaning our guns, and preparing in other ways for our anticipated campaign, our time passed pleasantly enough.

Whilst at this place our company was formally mustered into service of the embryo Republic of Texas. It was left optional with us to enlist for twelve months or for "during the war," and we unanimously chose the latter upon the principle of "in for a penny, in for a pound," or as Davy Crockett would have said, we resolved to "go the whole hog or none."

One day whilst we were encamped at Quintana we had quite an exciting scene, which bade fair for a time to initiate us into the realities of actual warfare. Two vessels were seen in the offing, one of them evidently in hot pursuit of the other. As soon as they had approached near enough to be distinctly seen through a glass, it was asserted by several who claimed to know, that the smaller vessel was the *Invincible*, a schooner recently purchased by Texas, and the larger one in pursuit was the *Bravo*, a noted Mexican privateer. In this opinion we were confirmed, as sharp cannonading began between the two vessels. Our company was at once ordered on board of a small steamer lying in the mouth of the

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Brazos, with instructions to hasten to the assistance of the *Invincible* with as little delay as possible. We quickly got up steam, and notwithstanding the violence of the breakers on the bar, which on two occasions broke entirely over our little steamer, we were soon alongside of the foremost vessel, which proved to be as we had supposed, the Texas schooner, *Invincible*. By this time the other vessel had approached near enough to be recognized as the *Brutus*, lately purchased also for the Texas navy, and after the interchange of some signals the firing ceased. Each vessel, it seems, had mistaken the other for the *Bravo*, and hence the pursuit of the *Brutus*, and the attempt of the *Invincible* to escape, as she had only a sailing crew on board; and we were compelled to return to camp without having had an opportunity of "fleshing our maiden swords."

A few days afterwards, our company was ordered to take up our quarters on board the *Invincible*, to serve as a kind of marine corps for her protection until a regular crew could be enlisted. Whilst on board of her, in the hope of meeting the *Bravo*, we took a cruise along the coast as far as the east end of Galveston Island. Here an incident occurred, which as being indicative of the great changes that have taken place since the times of which I write, may be worth mentioning. We were lying at anchor off the point of the island, and as we were running short of wood and water, a boat was sent ashore for a supply. The former could be had in any quantity along the beach, and the latter, though slightly brackish, by digging shallow wells at the base of the sand hills. When the boat was ready to return, it was found that one of the crew, who had wandered off from the well whilst the others were filling the casks, was missing. Search was made for him, but he was nowhere to be seen, and as there was every appearance of a "norther" coming up, the officer in command of the boat thought it most prudent to hasten back to the vessel, leaving the missing man on the island. In a few minutes after the boat reached the vessel the norther struck us, and we were compelled to hoist anchor and run before it.

Three days elapsed in beating back to our anchorage, and a boat was immediately sent ashore with a crew of half a dozen men, to look for our lost comrade. At length he was found, five or six miles below the place where he had been left, wandering on the beach, searching for oysters and clams, upon which he had subsisted since leaving the vessel. His mind was considerably affected by exposure to the norther, his fear of wild beasts and savages, and the apprehension of our failing to return. For several days he talked in a wild and incoherent manner, and he did not entirely regain his mind for two or three weeks. For three days this man had wandered about the island without seeing a living soul, and yet it is probable he was at no time more than four or five miles from where Galveston, a city of forty thousand inhabitants, now stands!

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After an unsuccessful cruise in search of the Bravo, we returned to Quintana, and pitched our tents again upon our old camping ground.

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CHAPTER III.

A day or so after our return to Quintana, the officer in command of the *Invincible* was instructed to take our company on board and to sail immediately for Copano, on Aransas bay, where we were to disembark and march from thence to Goliad. It was rumored that a considerable force had already been concentrated at that point, under the command of Col. J. W. Fannin, destined for the invasion of the border States of Mexico, and of course we surmised that our company would form a part of the invading army.

We set sail about dark, and a brisk norther springing up, by daylight the next morning we were in sight of Aransas Pass, which we shortly entered without difficulty, and cast anchor in a secure harbor behind the southwest point of Matagorda island. This harbor had been, in times past, a rendezvous for the vessels of the famous pirate, Lafitte. On the island the embankments around his old camping grounds or fortifications were still visible, and along the beach were many posts yet standing with iron rings affixed to them, which undoubtedly had been used for securing the small boats that plied between the vessels and the shore. "The pass" was known then only to Lafitte and his followers, and here in security they could repair their vessels, supply them with wood and water, and divide among themselves the spoils of their piratical expeditions. On the east end of Galveston island they had a similar place of rendezvous, near where the city now stands, and the remains of their fortifications could be plainly seen when I first landed on the island, in 1837. A few years ago, while excavating sand near these old fortifications, some workmen found a considerable amount of old Spanish coin, buried there no doubt, by some pirate on the eve of his departure upon some marauding expedition, from which probably he never returned.

We remained on the island several days, passing the time very pleasantly hunting and fishing, and gathering oysters, which were abundant in the bay, and then we embarked on board of a small vessel for Copano, which at that time was the principal port of Southwest Texas. In a few hours we reached the port, and landing, we pitched our tents on the bluff just back of it. Here we found a company of Texas Rangers who had been on frontier service for six months, during all of which time they had not seen a morsel of bread. They had subsisted solely upon beef and the game they killed. We gave them a part of the "hard tack" we had brought with us, and though wormeaten and musty, they devoured it with as keen a relish as if it had been the greatest delicacy. Although they had had no bread for so long a time, they were healthy and in "good order," which convinces me that Byron was right in saying

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that man was a carnivorous animal, and would bear vegetables "only in a grumbling way"—especially beans.

From Copano (which consisted mainly of a warehouse and a large tank of fresh water) we took up the line of march for Refugio, distant about twenty miles. It is situated on a little stream called Mission river, near the bank of which we pitched our tents, just before sunset. Refugio at that time contained about two dozen adobe huts (inhabited by a mixed population of Irish and Mexicans), and an old, dilapidated church, built, I was told, the same year that Philadelphia was founded. A few months subsequently Refugio was the scene of a hard fought battle between thirty-five Americans under Capt. King, and a large body of Mexican cavalry.

The old church, where King and his men defended themselves for some time against a host of Mexicans, when I last saw it, still showed evidence of the severity of the conflict in its battered walls and its roof perforated with shot from the Mexican artillery.

Observing a number of fat cows in the vicinity of the village, I concluded to go out and forage for a little of the "lacteal fluid," of which we had not had adrop since leaving Kentucky. So taking a camp kettle in my hand I went to the nearest house and inquired of a woman standing at the door, if she had any milk for sale. "Faith, and I have," said she, "any kind you may want, swate milk, butter milk, clabber milk and blue johns." I told her I would take some of the "swate," whereupon she led me to a small out-house, in which were a number of pans filled with milk. Selecting one containing the "swate," she rolled up her sleeve and deliberately proceeded to skim it with her open hand, which looked to me to have been unacquainted with soap and water for some time past. When she had finished skimming the milk in this primitive fashion, she poured the contents of the pan into my camp kettle, at the same time saying: "There, my little mon, there's a pan of milk for yez that's fit for the Pope of Room, Heaven protect His Holiness." I said nothing, though like the owl I did a good deal of thinking, paid for the milk and returned to camp, where my hungry messmates speedily emptied the kettle, wondering that I took coffee in preference to such nice new milk. I told them of the skimming process I had witnessed, but men in camp are not usually very "squeamish," and they merely said "that what would not poison would fatten;" that they had to "eat their peck of dirt anyhow," and the sooner they got through with the job the better.

The next morning we continued our march for Goliad, about thirty miles distant, but as we got a late start, we only made twenty miles or so by sunset, and pitched our camp near a pool of fresh water, under the shelter of some spreading live oak trees. Here we found encamped a band of the Caranchua tribe of Indians, at that time professing to be friendly to the Americans. We were told

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that these Indians were cannibals, that they always devoured the prisoners they took in their conflicts with their enemies. They were the largest Indians I have ever seen, scarcely a man among them being less than six feet high, and many of them over six feet. The men were entirely naked, saving a breech cloth fastened around the waist, and being hideously painted, one can readily imagine that they presented a most ferocious and savage appearance. Their language was the most peculiar jargon of guttural sounds I ever heard, the words seeming to be articulated by some spasmodic action of the throat without any aid from the tongue or lips. They were armed with long lances, bows and arrows, and a few with old flint-lock muskets.

These Indians some time afterwards captured several Americans and killed and "barbecued" them, which so enraged the settlers that they organized an expedition against them and succeeded in exterminating the whole tribe with the exception of a small remnant that fled to Mexico. These Caranchuas, I believe, were the only Indians known to be cannibals, on the North American continent.

Along the whole route from Copano to where we were encamped, we had seen great numbers of deer, sometimes as many as two or three hundred in a drove, and so unused to being hunted or disturbed by man, that even when we approached within a few yards of them they showed no signs of fear. Of course we had no difficulty in getting fresh meat whenever we wanted it. Once, too, at the distance of half a mile we saw a large drove of mustangs, but they were much wilder than the deer, for when several of us attempted to approach them, they circled around us out of range of our rifles, every now and then stopping a moment, stamping and snorting, until at last one of them that seemed to be the leader of the drove, started off at full speed, and the rest following, in a short time nothing but a cloud of dust indicated the direction they had taken. Some years subsequent to this, a company of rangers to which I belonged, when in pursuit of Indians in the country between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers, met with a drove of mustangs so large that it took us fully an hour to pass it, although they were traveling at a rapid rate in a direction nearly opposite to the one we were going. As far as the eye could extend on a dead level prairie, nothing was visible except a dense mass of horses, and the trampling of their hoofs sounded like the roar of the surf on a rocky coast. Most persons probably would be inclined to doubt this "horse story," and to consider it one to be told to the "horse marines" alone; yet it is literally true, and many are still living who were with me at the time, who can testify that my statement is in no manner exaggerated.

During the night a norther came up, but as we were well protected by thick timber, which afforded plenty of fuel for our fires, we

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managed to keep pretty comfortable. These "northers," as they are called in Texas, are winds that spring up suddenly from the North, during the winter season, sometimes "dry," at other times accompanied with rain or sleet. At first they blow with considerable violence, but gradually subside in the course of one, two or three days, and are followed usually by a week or so of clear, pleasant weather. To travelers unprepared for them they are very disagreeable visitants, and instances have been known of persons freezing to death in them when caught out in the open prairie where there was no shelter from the wind nor means of making a fire.

Early the next morning we took the road for Goliad again, and in the course of three or four hours we came in sight of the dome of the old Mission. Not long afterwards we entered the town and took up our quarters in an empty stone building near the old church. Here we found about four hundred men under the command of Colonel J. W. Fannin, the force with which it was designed to invade the border States of Mexico.

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CHAPTER IV.

GOLIAD, at the time we arrived there, contained a population of about two thousand Mexicans who were professedly friendly to the Texans, but who afterwards, when Santa Anna invaded the country, proved to be their most vindictive foes. I must, however, make an exception in favor of the "Senoritas," who generally preferred the blue-eyed, fair complexioned young Saxons to their copper-colored beaux.

Goliad is situated on the south side of the San Antonio river, about forty miles above its mouth, and ninety-five miles below the city of San Antonio. The American town of Goliad, built up since the war, is situated nearly opposite the old town, on the north side of the river. After the defeat of Santa Anna, the great majority of the inhabitants of the old town abandoned the place and went to Mexico. When I last saw it, in 1877, its population had dwindled down to one or two hundred miserable "peons" and most of the "jacals" or huts were gone. The Old Mission, with its dilapidated walls, half a dozen stone tenements and a few abode houses alone remained to designate the spot where once had stood the old town of Goliad.

The lands around the place are rich and productive, and the locality (though we did not find it so) is a healthy one. Thousands of fat beeves roamed the prairies in its vicinity, and as corn could be had in abundance upon the neighboring ranches, we were well supplied with provisions. Besides, when the Texans took possession of the place, several months previous to our arrival, a large amount of sugar and coffee was found in the Mexican commissary department, which of course, we did not scruple to appropriate to our own use.

In order to render his little force as effective as possible, when the time for action should come, Colonel Fannin ordered daily drills, which were my detestation and from which I invariably absented myself whenever I had a pretext for doing so. I greatly preferred hunting deer in the prairies and attending the "fandangos" or dances that took place daily and nightly in one part of the town or the other.

Not long after our arrival at Goliad the soubriquet of Mustangs or Wild Horses was acquired by our company from the following incident: M—, our second lieutenant, was a man of great physical powers, but withal one of the most peaceful and most genial men when not under the influence of liquor. But occasionally he would get on a "spree" and then he was as wild as a "March hare" and perfectly uncontrollable. The Mexicans seemed to know him and to fear him, also, and when he was on one of his "benders" they

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would retreat into their houses as soon as they saw him and shut their doors. This proceeding, of course, was calculated to irritate M—, and he would forthwith kick the door from its hinges. On a certain occasion he battered down the doors of half a dozen houses in one street, and from that time the Mexicans called him the "Mustang," and finally the name was applied to the company.

But few events occurred to a vary the daily routine of our life at Goliad. The following, however, I will mention: Our company was detailed on one occasion to go to San Patricio, an Irish settlement about fifty miles southwest from Goliad, for the purpose of securing a couple of field pieces left there by the Mexicans. This we accomplished without difficulty, and without any opposition, although our scouts had informed Colonel Fannin that a considerable force of Mexican guerillas was in the vicinity of the place.

On another occasion our company was detailed to march to Carlos Ranch, a Mexican village about twenty miles below Goliad, with instructions to arrest certain of the inhabitants, who, it was ascertained, were constantly transmitting intelligence of our movements to Santa Anna, and among the number was the old padre or priest of the village. In order that the Mexicans might not suspect our object and frustrate our plans by giving the padre and his friends timely warning of our intentions, we left the town quietly after dark in the opposite direction to the one we designed taking. When safe beyond observation, we turned our course down the river, and making a forced march, we reached the village a little before daylight and surrounded it without alarming any of the inhabitants. A detachment then entered the padre's house, and caught the bird in his nest, together with five or six other suspicious characters (supposed to be his couriers, as in fact they were), and the whole of them were "bagged" without alarming any of the people in the village. Having thus accomplished our object we marched to a point on the river about a quarter of a mile above, where we halted in a grove to rest and prepare something for breakfast. Placing a guard over the padre and his couriers, we stacked our guns and soon every one was busily engaged in cooking such "grub" as we had in our knapsacks. By this time the sun had risen, and we were just seating ourselves on the grass around the scanty fare we had prepared for our breakfast (consisting of hard tack, jerked beef and the inevitable coffee), when our attention was drawn to shrieks and doleful cries in the direction of the village, and seeing a crowd of people coming from it towards us, we hastily sprang to our guns, thinking the Mexicans were about to make an attempt to rescue the prisoners, but as the crowd drew nearer, we saw that it was composed mostly of women and children. It seems that they had just found out we had captured their Reverend padre, and they were coming to bid him farewell and obtain his parting blessing.

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I had heard that the Mexicans were completely under the control of their priests, but I had but a faint conception of the fact until I witnessed the scene that ensued. As they came up the women knelt at his feet, weeping and mourning, and kissed his hand and even the hem of his priestly robes. Presently another crowd of women came from the village, bringing with them plates filled with hot "tortillas," pots of coffee, "dulces," etc., intended for the padre's breakfast, and that of the other prisoners, and when they deposited them on the grass before them we took possession of them as the "legitimate spoils of war" and found they were much better than our course of hard tack and dried beef. Such conduct on our part, I admit, bordered closely on the "sacrilegious," but then you must remember we had been marching all night and of course were very hungry—and as the Mexicans said themselves, "what better could you expect from 'Gringos' and heretics!"

Seeing that the Rev. padre would have but little chance to get his breakfast until we had ours, the women continued to bring in fresh supplies of estables as fast as we disposed of them. Finally however, when our hunger was appeased, the Rev. padre and his couriers had a show at what was left.

In the vicinity of the place where we had halted, we noticed a large "corral" in which several hundred head of mustangs were penned. We were all tired of "trudging" on foot, and concluded we would "press" into the service (a military term for appropriating property belonging to others) a sufficient number of these mustangs to mount the whole company. Accordingly we compelled the Mexicans to rope and equip with saddles and bridles about fifty of them. We were all I suppose pretty good horsemen, as the term is understood in the "old States," but we knew that these mustangs were only partially broken to the saddle, and we anticipated having some "fun" when we mounted them—though nothing like as much as we really got, for at the time, we were totally ignorant of that peculiar trick of mustangs called "pitching," by which they manage almost invariably to get rid of a "green" rider. When the mustangs with considerable difficulty, after roping them closely to trees, had all been saddled and bridled, at the word of command, we mounted (except five or six who failed to do so) and the next instant a scene of horses kicking, rearing and plunging ensued, of which only a confused recollection remained upon my mind, and in less time than it takes me to tell of it, we were all put "hors de combat," (no pun intended.)

As for the part I took individually in this equestrian performance, I have only to say that I had hardly seated myself in the saddle, when my unruly steed humped his back like a mad cat, reared up, and then came down on his stiffened fore legs with such force, that if "next week" had been lying on the ground ten or

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fifteen feet ahead of me, I would certainly have knocked out the middle. I was partially stunned by the fall but soon rose to my feet, and was much relieved and consoled looking round, to find that all the rest had been served in the same way, except one rider who managed to stick upon his horse in spite of all the animal's efforts to get rid of him. The Mexicans no doubt had purposely selected the wildest horses in the corral, and it is probable the most of them had never been backed half a dozen times even by the rancheros themselves, who are unsurpassed by any people in horsemanship. I am confident that the padre and his flock enjoyed this equestrian performance much more than the actors, but as heretofore the laugh had been all on our side, we did not blame them for the pleasure they took in our discomfiture. However, we concluded to dispense with our unmanageable steeds, "unpressed" them by restoring them to their lawful owners, and resumed our march on foot for Goliad. The Mexican padre was sent to San Felipe on the Brazos, where he was securely caged until Santa Anna and his army were defeated and driven from Texas. He had the reputation of being a great scoundrel and an inveterate gambler, and his sinister countenance did not belie "the soft impeachment." I will do him the justice however, to say that we were indebted to him for the best breakfast we had eaten since landing in Texas. Peace to his ashes.

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CHAPTER V.

SOME time after our arrival at Goliad, information was obtained from some friendly Mexicans that General Santa Anna was preparing to enter Texas at the head of a large army; consequently all idea of invading Mexico, was abandoned, and we set to work to render the fortifications around the old missions as defensible as possible. We strengthened the walls in many places, built several new bastions on which artillery was placed in such a way as to command all the roads leading into the town.

Every day we were drilled by our officers for three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon, which, as I have said before was a great bore to me, as I would have preferred passing the time in hunting and fishing. We also deepened the trenches around the walls, and dug a ditch from the fort to the river, and covered it with plank and earth, so that we might obtain a supply of water, if besieged, without being exposed to the fire of the enemy. We were well supplied with artillery and ammunition for the same, and also with small arms, and had beef, sugar and coffee enough to last us for two months—but very little bread.

Some time in February, a Mexican from the Rio Grande arrived at Goliad who informed Col. Fannin that Santa Anna had already or would shortly cross the river into Texas with a large army which would advance in two divisions, one towards Goliad and the other towards the city of San Antonio. Some days afterwards, two or three Texans came in from San Patricio, bringing the news that Capt. Grant and some twenty-five or thirty men stationed at that place, had been surprised by a force of Mexican guarillas and all of them massacred. About this time also a courier from Refugio came in who stated to Col. Fannin that he had been sent by the people of that place, to ask for a detachment of men to escort them to Goliad, as they were daily expecting an attack from the guerillas.

In compliance with this request, Col. Fannin sent Capt. King and his company (about thirty-five men) to act as escort for those families who desired to leave. When Capt. King and his men reached Refugio, they were attacked on the outskirts of the town by a large force of Mexican cavalry, and being hard pressed they retreated into the old mission, a strong stone building, at that time encompassed by walls. There they defended themselves successfully, and kept the Mexicans at bay until their artillery came up, when they opened fire upon it with two field pieces which soon breached the walls, and the place was then taken by storm. Capt. King and some seven or eight of his men (the only survivors of the bloody conflict), were captured and led out to a post oak grove north of town, where they were tied to trees and shot. Their bones were found still tied

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to the trees, when the Texan forces re-occupied the place in the summer of '36.

About this time a courier arrived bringing a dispatch from Gen. Houston to Col. Fannin, and it was rumored in camp that the purport of this dispatch was "that Col. Fannin should evacuate Goliad and fall back without delay towards the settlements on the Colorado." But as to the truth of this I cannot speak positively. At any rate Col. Fannin showed no disposition to obey the order if he received it—on the contrary, hearing nothing from Capt. King, although he had sent out there scouts at different times to obtain information of his movements, all of whom were captured and killed, he despatched Maj. Ward with the Georgia Battalion (about one hundred and fifty strong) to his assistance. They were attacked before they reached Refugio by a large force of Mexican cavalry. They made a gallant defense for some time against the vastly superior numbers of the enemy, but at length their ammunition was exhausted and they were compelled to retreat to the timber on the river, where they were surrounded by the Mexican cavalry, and most of them finally captured.

This division of our small force in the face of an enemy so greatly our superior in numbers, was, in my opinion, a fatal error on the part of Col. Fannin.

Hearing nothing either from Capt. King or Major Ward, and satisfied from information obtained by our scouts that a large force of Mexicans was in the vicinity of Goliad, Col. Fannin and his officers held a council of war in which it was determined to evacuate the place and fall back as rapidly as possible towards Victoria on the Guadalupe river. The same day, I believe, or the next after this council of war was held, a courier came in from San Antonio bringing a dispatch, as I was informed, from Col. Travis, to the effect "that he was surrounded in the Alamo by Santa Anna's army, and requesting Col. Fannin to come to his relief without delay."

Rations for five days and as much ammunition as each man could conveniently carry were immediately issued, and our whole force, including a small artillery company with two or three field pieces, started for San Antonio, crossing the river at the ford a half mile or so above town. After crossing the river and marching a short distance on the San Antonio road, a halt was made and our officers held a consultation, the result of which (I suppose) was the conclusion that we could not reach San Antonio in time to be of any assistance to Col. Travis. At any rate we were marched back to Goliad, recrossing the river at the lower ford.

A few hours after we had got back to our old quarters, a detachment of Mexican cavalry, probably eighty or a hundred strong, showed themselves at a short distance from the fort apparently bantering us to come out and give them a fight. Col. Horton, who

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had joined us a few days previously with twenty-five mounted men, went out to meet them, but when he charged them they fled precipitately, and we saw them no more that day.

That evening preparations were made to abandon the place; to that end we spiked our heaviest pieces of artillery, buried some in trenches, reserving several field pieces, two or three hawitzers and a mortar to take with us on our retreat. We also dismantled the fort as much as possible, burnt the wooden buildings in its immediate vicinity and destroyed all the ammunition and provisions for which we had no means of transportation.

The next morning we bade a final farewell, as we supposed, to Goliad, and marched out on the road to Victoria. We had nine small pieces of ordnance and one mortar, all drawn by oxen as were our baggage wagons. Our whole force comprised about two hundred and fifty men, besides a small company of artillery and twenty-five mounted men under Col. Horton.

We crossed the San Antonio river at the ford below town, and a short distance beyond Menahecila creek we entered the large prairie extending to the timber on the Coletto, a distance of eight or nine miles. When we had approached within two and a half or three miles of the point where the road we were traveling entered the timber (though it was somewhat nearer to the left) a halt was ordered and the oxen were unyoked from guns and wagons, and turned out to graze. What induced Col. Fannin to halt at this place in the openprairie, I cannot say, for by going two and a half miles further, we would have reached the Coletto creek, where there was an abundance of water and where we would have had the protection of timber in the event of being attacked. I understood at the time that several of Col. Fannin's officers urged him strongly to continue the march until we reached the creek, as it was certain that a large body of Mexican troops were somewhere in the vicinity; but however this may be, Col. Fannin was not to be turned from his purpose, and the halt was made. Possibly he may have thought that two hundred and fifty well armed Americans under any circumstances would be able to defend themselves against any force the Mexicans had within striking distance, but as the sequel will show the halt at this place was a most fatal one for us. Up to this time we had seen no Mexicans, with the exception of two mounted men, who made their appearance from some timber a long way to our right and who no doubt were spies watching our movements.

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CHAPTER VI.

AT length after a halt of perhaps an hour and a half on the prairie, and just as we were about to resume our march for the Coletto, a long dark line was seen to detach itself from the timber behind us, and another at the same time from the timber to our left. Some one near me exclaimed, "Here come the Mexicans!" and in fact, in a little while, we perceived that these dark lines were men on horseback, moving rapidly towards us. As they continued to approach, they lengthened out their columns, evidently for the purpose of surrounding us, and in doing so displayed their numbers to the greatest advantage. I thought there were at least ten thousand (having never before seen a large cavalry force), but in reality there were about a thousand besides several hundred infantry (mostly Carise Indians).

In the meantime we were formed into a "hollow square" with lines three deep, in order to repel the charge of the cavalry, which we expected would soon be made upon us. Our artillery was placed at the four angles of the square, and our wagons and oxen inside. Our vanguard under Col. Horton, had gone a mile or so ahead of us, and the first intimation they had of the approach of the enemy was hearing the fire of our artillery when the fight began. They galloped back as rapidly as possible to regain our lines, but the Mexicans had occupied the road before they came up and they were compelled to retreat. The Mexicans pursued them beyond the Coletto, but as they were well mounted they made their escape.

The loss of these mounted men was a most unfortunate one for us. Had they been with us that night after we had driven off the Mexicans, we would have had means of transportation for our wounded, and could easily have made our retreat to the Coletto.

When the Mexicans had approached to within half a mile of our lines they formed into three columns, one remaining stationary, the other two moving to our right and left, but still keeping at about the same distance from us. Whilst they were carrying out this maneuver, our artillery opened upon them with some effect, for now and then we could see a round shot plough through their dense ranks. When the two moving columns the one on the right and the one on the left were opposite to each other, they suddenly changed front and the three columns with trumpets braying and pennons flying, charged upon us simultaneously from three directions.

When within three or four hundred yards of our lines our artillery opened upon them with grape and cannister shot, with deadly effect,—but still their advance was unchecked, until their foremost ranks were in actual contact in some places with the bayonets of our men. But the fire at close quarters from our

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muskets and rifles was so rapid and destructive, that before long they fell back in confusion, leaving the ground covered in places with horses and dead men.

Capt. D——'s company of Kentucky riflemen and one or two small detachments from other companies formed one side of our "square," and in addition to our rifles, each man in the front rank was furnished with a musket and bayonet to repel the charge of cavalry. Besides my rifle and musket I had slung across my shoulders an "escopeta," a short light "blunderbuss" used by the Mexican cavalry, which I had carried all day in expectation of a fight, and which was heavily charged with forty "blue whistlers" and powder in proportion. It was my intention only to fire it when in a very "tight place," for I was well aware it was nearly as dangerous behind it as before. In the charge made by the Mexican cavalry they nearly succeeded in breaking our lines at several places, and certainly they would have done so had we not taken the precaution of arming all in the front rank with the bayonet and musket. At one time it was almost a hand to hand fight between the cavalry and our front rank, but the two files in the rear poured such a continuous fire upon the advancing columns, that, as I have said, they were finally driven back in disorder. It was during this charge and when the Mexican cavalry on our side of the square were in a few feet of us, that I concluded that I had got into that "tight place" and that it was time to let off the "scopet" I carried. I did so, and immediately I went heels over head through both ranks behind me. One or two came to my assistance supposing no doubt I was shot (and in truth I thought for a moment myself that a two ounce bullet had struck me) but I soon rose to my feet and took my place in the line again just as the cavalry began to fall back. Now, I don't assert that it was the forty "blue whistlers" I had sent among them from my "scopet" that caused them to retreat in confusion. I merely mention the fact that they did fall back very soon after I had let off the blunderbuss among them. My shoulder was black and blue from the recoil for a month afterwards. When I took my place in the line again, I never looked for my "scopet," but contented myself while the fight lasted with my rifle.

The Mexicans had no doubt supposed they would be able to break our lines at the first charge, and were evidently much disconcerted by their failure to do so; for although they reformed their broken columns and made two more attempts to charge us, they were driven back as soon as they came within close range of our small arms.

When they were satisfied that it was impossible for them to break our lines, the cavalry dismounted and surrounding us in open order, they commenced a "fusilade" upon us with their muskets and escopetas, but being very poor marksmen, most of their bullets

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passed harmlessly over our heads. Besides, this was a game at which we could play also, and for every man killed or wounded on our side I am confident that two or three Mexicans fell before the deadly fire from our rifles. But there were with the Mexicans probably a hundred or so Carise Indians, who were much more daring, and withal better marksmen. They boldly advanced to the front, and taking advantage of every little inequality of the ground and every bunch of grass that could afford them particular cover, they would crawl up closely and fire upon us, and now and then the discharge of their long single barrel shot guns was followed by the fall of some one in our ranks. Four of them had crawled up behind some bunches of tall grass within eighty yards of us, from whence they delivered their fire with telling effect. Capt. D—who was using a heavy Kentucky rifle, and was known to be one of the best marksmen in his company, was requested to silence these Indians. He took a position near a gun carriage, and whenever one of the Indians showed his head above the tall grass it was perforated with an ounce rifle ball, and after four shots they were seen no more. At the moment he fired the last shot Capt. D—had one of the fingers of his right hand taken off by a musket ball. When the Mexicans quit the field, we examined the locality where these Indians had secreted themselves, and found the four lying closely together, each one with a bullet hole through his head.

At the commencement of the fight a little incident of a somewhat ludicrous character occurred. We had some five or six Mexican prisoners (the couriers of the old padre, captured at Carlos' Ranch). These we had placed within the square, when the fight began, for safe keeping, and in an incredibly short time, with picks and shovels, they dug a trench deep enough to "hole" themselves, where they lay "perdue" and completely protected from bullets. I for one, however, didn't blame them, as they were non-combatants, and besides to tell the truth when bullets were singing like mad hornets around me, and men were struck down near me, I had a great inclination to "hole up" myself and draw it in after me.

The fight continued in a desultory kind of way, until near sunset, when we made a sortie upon the dismounted cavalry, and they hastily remounted and fell back to the timber to our left, where, as soon as it was dark, a long line of fires indicated the position of their encampment.

That night was anything but rest for us, for anticipating a renewal of the fight the next morning, all hands were set to work digging entrenchments and throwing up embankments, and at this we labored unceasingly till nearly daylight. We dug four trenches enclosing a square large enough to contain our whole force, throwing the earth on the outside, on which we placed our baggage and

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everything else available, that might help to protect us from the bullets of the enemy.

Before we began this work, however, Col. Fannin made a short speech to the men, in which he told them "that in his opinion, the only way of extricating themselves from the difficulty they were in, was to retreat after dark to the timber on the Coletto, and cut their way through the enemy's lines should they attempt to oppose the movement." He told them there was no doubt they would be able to do this, as the enemy had evidently been greatly demoralized by the complete failure of the attack they had made upon us. He said, moreover, that the necessity for a speedy retreat was the more urgent, as it was more than probable that the Mexicans would be heavily reinforced during the night. He concluded by saying that if a majority were in favor of retreating, preparations would be made to leave as soon as it was dark enough to conceal our movements from the enemy. But we had about seventy men wounded (most of them badly) and as almost every one had some friend or relative among them, after a short consultation upon the subject, it was unanimously determined not to abandon our wounded men, but to remain with them and share their fate, whatever it might be.

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CHAPTER VII.

OUR loss in the Coletto fight was ten killed and about seventy wounded (Col. Fannin among the latter), and most of them badly, owing to the size of the balls thrown by the Mexican escopetas, and the shotguns of the Indians. The number of our casualties was extremely small considering the force of the enemy, and the duration of the fight, which began about three o'clock and lasted till nearly sunset. I can only account for it by the fact that the Mexicans were very poor marksmen, and that their powder was of a very inferior quality. There was scarcely a man in the whole command who had not been struck by one or more spent balls, which, in place of mere bruises would have inflicted dangerous or fatal wounds if the powder used by the Mexicans had been better.

I can never forget how slowly the hours of that dismal night passed by. The distressing cries of our wounded men begging for water when there was not a drop to give them, were continually ringing in my ears. Even those who were not wounded, but were compelled to work all night in the trenches, suffered exceedingly with thirst. Even after we had fortified our position as well as we could, we had but little hopes of being able to defend ourselves, should the Mexicans as we apprehended, receive reinforcements during the night, for we had but one or two rounds of ammunition left for the cannon, and what remained for the small arms was not sufficient for a protracted struggle.

Some time during the night it was ascertained that three of our men (whose names I have forgotten) had deserted, and shortly afterwards as a volley of musketry was heard between us and the timber on the Coletto, they were no doubt discovered and shot by the Mexican patrol.

Daylight at last appeared, and before the sun had risen we saw that the Mexican forces were all in motion, and evidently preparing to make another attack upon us. When fairly out of the timber, we soon discovered that they had been heavily reinforced during the night. In fact, as we subsequently learned from the Mexicans themselves, a detachment of seven hundred and fifty cavalry and an artillery company had joined them shortly after their retreat to the timber. In the fight of the previous day they had no cannon.

They moved down upon us in four divisions, and when within five or six hundred yards, they unlimbered their field pieces (two brass nine pounders) and opened fire upon us. We did not return their fire, because as I have said, we had only one or two rounds of ammunition left for our cannon, and the distance was too great for small arms. Their shot, however, all went over us, and besides, the breast works we had thrown up would have protected us, even

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if their guns had been better aimed. We expected momentarily that the cavalry would charge us, but after firing several rounds from their nine pounders, an officer accompanied by a soldier bearing a white flag, rode out towards us, and by signs gave us to understand that he desired a "parley." Major Wallace and several other officers went out and met him about half way between our "fort" and the Mexican lines. The substance of the Mexican officer's communication (as I understood at the time) was to the effect "that Gen. Urrea, the commander of the Mexican forces, being anxious to avoid the useless shedding of blood (seeing we were now completely in his power), would guarantee to Col. Fannin and his men, on his word of honor as an officer and gentleman, that we would be leniently dealt with, provided we surrendered at discretion, without further attempt at hopeless resistance." When this message was delivered to Col. Fannin, he sent word back to the officer "to say to Gen. Urrea, it was a waste of time to discuss the subject of surrendering at discretion—that he would fight as long as there was a man left to fire a gun before he would surrender on such terms."

A little while afterwards the Mexicans again made a show of attacking us, but just as we were expecting them to charge, Gen. Urrea himself rode out in front of his lines accompanied by several of his officers and the soldier with the "white flag." Col. Fannin and Major Wallace went out to meet them, and the terms of capitulation were finally agreed upon, the most important of which was, that we should be held as prisoners of war until exchanged, or liberated on our parole of honor not to engage in the war again—at the option of the Mexican commander in chief. There were minor articles included in it, such as that our side arms should be retained, etc.

When the terms of capitulation had been fully decided upon, Gen. Urrea and his secretary and interpreter came into our lines with Col. Fannin, where it was reduced to writing, and an English translation given to Col. Fannin which was read to our men. I am thus particular in stating what I know to be the facts in regard to this capitulation, because I have seen it stated that Gen. Santa Anna always asserted there was no capitulation, and that Col. Fannin surrendered at discretion to Gen. Urrea. This assertion I have no doubt was made to justify as far as possible his order for the cold blooded murder of disarmed prisoners. Gen. Urrea, I believe, never denied the fact of the capitulation, and I have been informed, when the order was sent him by Santa Anna to execute the prisoners, he refused to carry it into effect, and turned over the command to a subaltern.

I have always believed myself that Gen. Urrea entered into the capitulation with Col. Fannin in good faith, and that the massacre

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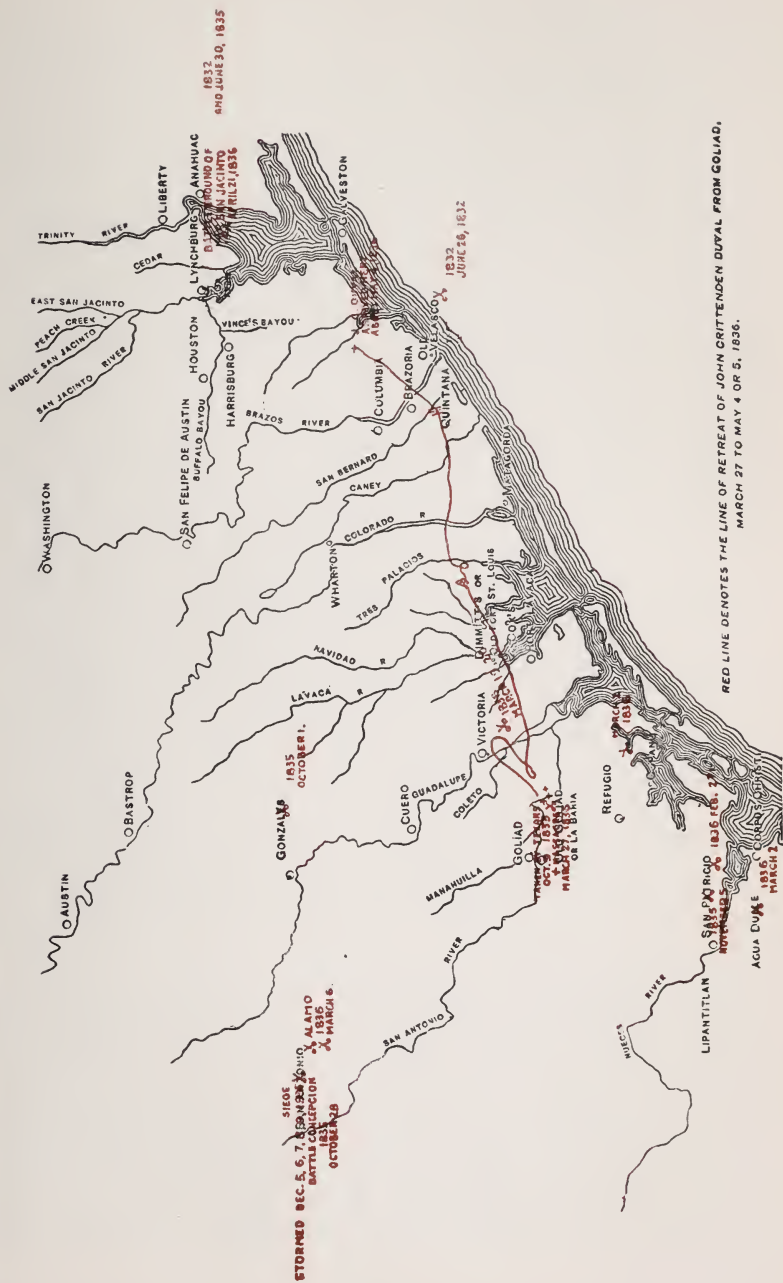
of the prisoners, which took place some days afterwards, was by the express order of Santa Anna, and against the remonstrances of Gen. Urrea. If Gen. Urrea had intended to act treacherously, the massacre, in my opinion, would have taken place as soon as we had delivered up our arms, when we were upon an open prairie, surrounded by a large force of cavalry, where it would have been utterly impossible for a single soul to have escaped, and consequently he could then have given to the world his own version of the affair without fear of contradiction.

I have said nothing as yet of the Mexican loss in the fight and I cannot do so with any certainty, of my own knowledge; but there is no doubt it was much greater than ours. They told us after we had surrendered that we had killed and wounded several hundred. Dr. Joseph Barnard, our assistant surgeon, who was saved from the massacre to attend their wounded, told me afterwards that he was confident we had killed and wounded between three and four hundred, and his opportunities for forming a correct estimate of the number were certainly better than those of any one else.

After our surrender we were marched back to Goliad, escorted by a large detachment of cavalry, and there confined within the walls surrounding the old mission.

Among the Mexican officers there was a lieutenant by the name of Martinez, who had been educated at a Catholic college in Kentucky, where he had been a room-mate of a member of Capt. D——'s company, by the name of B——. Every day whilst we were prisoners he used to come and talk with B——, and professed his great regret to find him in such a situation, but he never gave him the slightest intimation of the treacherous designs of the Mexicans, nor, as far as I know, made the least effort to save his college room-mate.





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CHAPTER VIII.

A day or so after our return as prisoners to Goliad, Maj. Ward and his battalion, or rather those who survived the engagement they had with the Mexicans, near Refugio, were brought in and confined with us, within the walls enclosing the old mission; and also a company of about eighty men under the command of Maj. Miller, who had been surprised and captured at Copano just after they had landed from their vessel. These men were also confined with us, but kept separate from the rest, and to distinguish them, each had a white cloth tied around one of his arms. At the time, I had no idea why this was done, but subsequently I learned the reason.

The morning of the sixth day after our return to Goliad, whether the Mexicans suspected we intended to rise upon the guard, or whether they merely wished to render our situation as uncomfortable as possible, I know not, but at any rate from that time we were confined in the old mission, where we were so crowded we had hardly room to lie down at night. Our rations too, about that time, had been reduced to five ounces of fresh beef a day, which we had to cook in the best way we could and eat without salt.

Although, thus closely confined and half starved, no personal indignity was ever offered to us to my knowledge, except on two occasions. Once a Mexican soldier pricked one of our men with his bayonet, because he did not walk quite fast enough to suit him, whereupon he turned and knocked the Mexican down with his fist. I fully expected to see him roughly handled for this "overt act," but the officers in command of the guard, who saw the affair, came up to him and patting him on the shoulder, told him he was "muy bravo," and that he had served the soldier exactly right. At another time one of our men was complaining to the officer of the guard of the ration issued to him, who ordered one of the soldiers to collect a quantity of bones and other offal lying around, and throwing them on the ground before the man said, "There, eat as much as you want—good enough for Gringoes and heretics."

One day an officer who was passing, asked me some question in Spanish, and when I answered him in Spanish, he took a seat by me, and talked with me for some time. He asked me a great many questions about the United States, our form of government, the number of our regular army, what State I came from and what induced me to come to Texas, etc., to all of which I frankly answered. He expressed much astonishment at the correctness of my pronunciation, and asked where I had learned to speak Spanish, saying he was sure I had not learnt the language among the Mexicans. I told him I had studied Spanish under a teacher of modern languages at a Catholic institution in Kentucky. He then asked

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if I was a Catholic myself, and when I told him I was not, he seemed disappointed, and tried in various ways to get some sort of admission from me that I had more faith in the Catholic religion than any other.

The talk I had with this officer made but little impression upon me at the time, but I have since thought on account of my youth, or because I had in some way gained his favor, he was desirous of an excuse or pretext to save me from the fate he probably knew was in store for us. I know that several of our men were saved from the massacre, for no other reason that I am aware of, than that they professed to be members of the Catholic church. Several times afterwards the officer above mentioned came to talk with me, and he insisted I was a Catholic if I would but own it; but I strenuously denied "the soft impeachment" to the last. If I had suspected his object in getting me to admit that I was a Catholic, it is probable I might have sought temporal as well as eternal safety the bosom of the church. It would have been very easy for me to have passed for a "good Catholic," for Catholicism (at least among the lower class of Mexicans) consists mainly in knowing how to make the sign of the cross, together with unbounded reverence first, for the Virgin Mary, and secondly, for the saints generally—and the priests. But I did not suspect the object this officer had in view when he tried to make a convert of me to the true faith, and I am afraid I have lost the only chance I shall ever have of becoming a "good Catholic."

On the morning of the 27th of March, a Mexican officer came to us and ordered us to get ready for a march. He told us we were to be liberated on "parole," and that arrangements had been made to send us to New Orleans on board of vessels then at Copano. This, you may be sure, was joyful news to us, and we lost no time in making preparations to leave our uncomfortable quarters. When all was ready we were formed into three divisions and marched out under a strong guard. As we passed by some Mexican women who were standing near the main entrance to the fort, I heard them say "pobrecitos" (poor fellows), but the incident at the time made but little impression on my mind.

One of our divisions was taken down the road leading to the lower ford of the river, one upon the road to San Patricio, and the division to which my company was attached, along the road leading to San Antonio. A strong guard accompanied us, marching in double files on both sides of our column. It occurred to me that this division of our men into three squads, and marching us off in three directions, was rather a singular maneuver, but still I had no suspicion of the foul play intended us. When about half a mile above town, a halt was made and the guard on the side next the river filed around to the opposite side. Hardly had this maneuver

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been executed, when I heard a heavy firing of musketry in the directions taken by the other two divisions. Some one near me exclaimed "Boys! they are going to shoot us!" and at the same instant I heard the clicking of musket locks all along the Mexican line. I turned to look, and as I did so, the Mexicans fired upon us, killing probably one hundred out of the one hundred and fifty men in the division. We were in double file and I was in the rear rank. The man in front of me was shot dead, and in falling he knocked me down. I did not get up for a moment, and when I rose to my feet, I found that the whole Mexican line had charged over me, and were in hot pursuit of those who had not been shot and who were fleeing towards the river about five hundred yards distant. I followed on after them, for I knew that escape in any other direction (all open prairie) would be impossible, and I had nearly reached the river before it became necessary to make my way through the Mexican line ahead. As I did so, one of the soldiers charged upon me with his bayonet (his gun I suppose being empty). As he drew his musket back to make a lunge at me, one of our men coming from another direction, ran between us, and the bayonet was driven through his body. The blow was given such force, that in falling, the man probably wrenched or twisted the bayonet in such a way as to prevent the Mexican from withdrawing it immediately. I saw him put his foot upon the man, and make an ineffectual attempt to extricate the bayonet from his body, but one look satisfied me, as I was somewhat in a hurry just then, and I hastened to the bank of the river and plunged in. The river at that point was deep and swift, but not wide, and being a good swimmer, I soon gained the opposite bank, untouched by any of the bullets that were pattering in the water around my head. But here I met with an unexpected difficulty. The bank on that side was so steep I found it was impossible to climb it, and I continued to swim down the river until I came to where a grape vine hung from the bough of a leaning tree nearly to the surface of the water. This I caught hold of and was climbing up it hand over hand, sailor fashion, when a Mexican on the opposite bank fired at me with his escopeta, and with so true an aim, that he cut the vine in two just above my head, and down I came into the water again. I then swam on about a hundred yards further, when I came to a place where the bank was not quite so steep, and with some difficulty I managed to clamber up.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE river on the north side was bordered by timber several hundred yards in width, through which I quickly passed and I was just about to leave it and strike out into the open prairie, when I discovered a party of lancers nearly in front of me, sitting on their horses, and evidently stationed there to intercept any one who should attempt to escape in that direction. I halted at once under cover of the timber, through which I could see the lancers in the open prairie but which hid me entirely from their view.

Whilst I was thus waiting and undecided as to the best course to pursue under the circumstances, I saw a young man by the name of Holliday, one of my own messmates, passing through the timber above me in a course that would have taken him out at the point directly opposite to which the lancers were stationed. I called to him as loudly as I dared and fortunately, being on the "qui vive," he heard me, and stopped far enough within the timber to prevent the lancers from discovering him. I then pulled off a fur cap I had on, and backoned to him with it. This finally drew his attention to me, and as soon as he saw me he came to where I was standing, from whence, without being visible to them, the lancers could be plainly seen.

A few moments afterwards we were joined by a young man by the name of Brown, from Georgia, who had just swam the river, and had accidentally stumbled on the place where Holliday and I were holding a "council of war" as to what was the best course to pursue. Holliday, although a brave man, was very much excited, and had lost to some extent his presence of mind, for the proposed we should leave the timber at once and take the chances of evading the lancers we saw on the prairie. I reasoned with him on the folly of such a proceeding, and told him it would be impossible for us to escape in the open prairie from a dozen men on horseback. "But," said Holliday, "the Mexicans are crossing the river behind us, and they will soon be here." "That may be," I replied, "but they are not here yet, and in the mean time something may turn up to favor our escape." Brown took the same view of the case I did, and Holliday's wild proposition to banter a dozen mounted men for a race on the open prairie was "laid upon the table."

Whilst we were debating this (to us) momentous question, some four or five of our men passed out of the timber before we saw them, into the open prairie, and when they discovered the lancers it was too late. The lancers charged upon them at once, speared them to death, and then dismounting robbed them of such things as they had upon their persons. From where we stood the whole proceeding was plainly visible to us, and as may be imagined, it

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was not calculated to encourage any hopes we might have had of making our escape. However, after the lancers had plundered the men they had just murdered, they remounted, and in a few moments set off in a rapid gallop down the river to where it is probable they had discovered other fugitives coming out of the timber. We at once seized the opportunity thus afforded us to leave the strip of timber which we knew could give us shelter but for a few moments longer, and started out, taking advantage of a shallow ravine which partially hid us from view. We had scarcely gone two hundred yards from the timber, when we saw the lancers gallop back and take up their position at the same place they had previously occupied. Strange to say, however, they never observed us, although we were in plain view of them for more than a quarter of a mile, without a single brush or tree to screen us.

We traveled about five or six miles and stopped in a thick grove to rest ourselves, where we stayed until night. All day long we heard at intervals irregular discharges of musketry in the distance, indicating, as we supposed, were fugitives from the massacre were overtaken and shot by the pursuing parties of Mexicans.

As the undergrowth was pretty dense in the grove where we had stopped, we concluded the chances of being picked up by one of these pursuing parties would be greater if we traveled on than if we remained where we were, and we determined to "lie by" until night. In taking the matter over and reflecting upon the many narrow risks we had run in making our escape, we came to the conclusion that in all probability we were the only survivors of the hundreds who had that morning been led out to slaughter; although in fact as we subsequently learned, twenty-five or thirty of our men eventually reached the settlements on the Brazos. Drs. Shackleford and Barnard, our surgeons, were saved from the massacre to attend upon Mexicans in the fight on the Coletto, and when their forces retreated from Goliad after the battle of San Jacinto these were taken to San Antonio, where they were ultimately liberated. Our own wounded men, or rather those of them that survived up to the time of the massacre, were carried out into the open square of the fort, and there cruelly butchered by the guard. Capt. Miller and his men were saved, because, as I was subsequently informed, they had been captured soon after they landed from their vessel, without any arms, and of course without making any resistance.

Col. Fannin, who was confined to his quarters by a wound he had received at the fight on the Coletto, soon after the massacre of his men, was notified to prepare for immediate execution. He merely observed that he was ready then, as he had no desire to live after the cold-blooded, cowardly murder of his men. He was thereupon taken out to the square by a guard, where he was seated

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on a bench, and his eyes blindfolded. A moment before the order to "fire" was given, I was told (though I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement) he drew a fine gold watch from his pocket, and handing it to the officer in command of the guard, requested him as a last favor to order his men to shoot him in the breast and not in the head. The officer took the watch, and immediately ordered the guard to fire at his head. Col. Fannin fell dead and his body was thrown into one of the ravines near the fort. Thus died as brave a son of Georgia as ever came from that noble old State.

The escape of Wm. Hunter was most wonderful. At the first fire he fell pierced by a musket ball. A Mexican soldier thinking he was not quite dead, cut his throat with a butcher knife, but not deep enough to sever the jugular vein, stabbed him with his bayonet and then beat him over the head with the breech of his musket, until he was satisfied his bloody work was accomplished. He then stripped him of his clothing and left him for dead upon the ground where he had fallen. Hunter laid there in a perfectly unconscious state until dark, after night came on, the cool air and dew revived him, and by degrees he regained his senses. For a time all that had occurred since morning appeared like a troubled dream to him, but gradually the reality of the events that had taken place forced itself upon his mind, and he cautiously raised his head to reconnoitre. All was still around, and not a moving living creature was visible, nothing but the pallid upturned faces of his murdered comrades dimly seen in the waning light of day. He found himself extremely weak from loss of blood, and his limbs were sore and stiffened; but he was suffering intensely from thirst, and he resolved, if possible, to drag himself to the river. With much pain and difficulty, he succeeded in reaching the water, and after quenching his thirst, he bound up his wounds as well as he could with strips of cloth torn from his shirt.

Before daylight he had recovered his strength so far that he was able to swim the river, and took his way to a Mexican ranch on the Manahuila creek, with the people of which he had had some previous acquaintance, thinking it was better to trust himself to their tender mercies than to attempt to ravel through a wilderness in his wounded and weakened condition.

When near the ranch he met a Mexican woman, who told him he would certainly be killed if he went there. She advised him to secrete himself in a thicket she designated, and told him as soon as it was dark she would come out to him and bring him some food and clothing. Hunter had his suspicions that she intended to betray him, yet there was no alternative but to trust her, and he hid himself in the thicket she had pointed out to him, and anxiously awaited her reappearance. True to her promise, a little while after

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dark, she returned, bringing some provisions and water, together with a suit of Mexican clothes.

For nearly a week this Mexican woman came to his place of concealment every night, fed him and dressed his wounds until he was sufficiently restored to travel. She then supplied him with as much provisions as he could carry and also a flint and steel for making fire, and bidding him "adios" she returned to the ranch.

Thus recruited and supplied with clothing and provisions, Hunter took his course through the wilderness, and having a pretty good idea of the "lay of the land," after many narrow escapes he eventually made his way to the Texan army under General Houston.

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CHAPTER X.

AS soon as it was dark we left our hiding place and set out in a northeasterly direction, as nearly as we could determine, and traveled until daylight, when we stopped an hour or so in a grove to rest. We then proceed on our course again till near sunset, when we encamped in a thick "mot" of timber without water. An unusually cold norther for the season of the year was blowing, and a steady drizzling rain was falling when we stopped. Brown, who had pulled off his coat and shoes before he swam the San Antonio river, suffered severely, and I was apprehensive, should we be exposed all night to such weather without a fire, that he would freeze to death. I had a little tinder box in my pocket containing a flint and steel, but all the tinder there was in it was a small piece not much larger than a pin head.

This I carefully placed on a batch of cotton taken from the lining of my fur cap, and after many unsuccessful efforts I managed at last to ignite it. With this we started a fire, and then the first thing I did was to tear off a portion from my drawers, which I partially burned, thus securing a good supply of tinder for future use. Before going to sleep we collected fuel enough to last until daylight, with which we occasionally replenished the fire so that we passed the night in tolerable comfort.

The next morning Brown, who as I have previously stated, had pulled off his coat and shoes and thrown them away when he swam the river, found himself so sore and crippled he was unable to travel. The prairie we had passed over the day before, ad been recently burned off and the shorp points of the stubble had lacerated his naked feet dreadfully. It was evident he could not go on without some sort of covering for his feet. I cut off the legs of my boots, and with a pair of scissors which he happened to have in his pocket, and some twine, I contrived to make him a pair of sandals, such as I had seen worn by Mexican soldiers. After thus shoeing him (by way of remuneration, I suppose,) Brown separated the two blades of the scissors and gave me one of them, which was of great service to me, for by whetting it on stones I gave it an edge, and it answered pretty well in place of a knife.

The grove of timber in which we had passed the night, covered perhaps an acre of ground, and just outside of it there was a strip of sandy soil almost bare of grass. In the morning when we left the grove we observed a good many fresh mocassin tracks which must have been made during the night by a party of Indians, who probably had been drawn to the locality by the light from our fire. Why they did not attack us I cannot imagine, unless it was because they were ignorant of our number and that we were without

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arms. At any rate, but for their tracks in the sand we would not have known they had been around our camp during the night.

The next morning we set out, as we supposed, in the direction we had traveled the day before, and in about one hour we came to some timber, bordering upon what I thought was one of the branches of the Coletto creek. Here we laid ourselves down on the grass to rest for a few moments, and scarcely had we done so when a party of ten Mexican lancers made their appearance, riding along a trail that ran within fifty yards of where we were lying. As luck would have it, just as they came opposite to where we were, they met another soldier and stopped to have a talk with him. For nearly an hour, it seemed to me, but in fact, I suppose, for only a few minutes, they sat on their horses conversing together within a few paces of where we were lying, and without a single bush or tree intervening to hide us from their view, but fortunately they never looked toward us or we would inevitably have been discovered. At length they rode on, and we were very glad when we lost sight of them behind a point of timber.

The weather still continued cloudy and drizzly, and not being able to see the sun we had nothing to guide us, and in consequence were doubtful as to whether or not we were pursuing the right course. However, we traveled on until night, and again encamped in a thick grove of timber. Having eaten nothing since we left Goliad, and only a small piece of beef for two days previously, we had begun to suffer severely from the pangs of hunger. Game we had everywhere seen in the greatest abundance, but having no guns, the sight of herds of deer and flocks of wild turkeys, suggestive as they were to our minds of juicy steaks and roasts, only served to aggravate the cravings of our appetite. It was at a season of the year, too, when no berries or wild fruits were to be found, and the pecans and other nuts had fallen and been destroyed by wild hogs, deer and other animals. But in spite of our hunger we slept pretty well on our beds of dry leaves, except that we were occasionally aroused from our slumbers by the howling of wolves, which were sometimes so impudent as to approach within a few paces of the fire about which we were lying.

In the morning the weather was still cloudy and cold, and we set out again upon our travels. Holliday being by several years the oldest of our party, had heretofore taken the lead to which Brown and I had made no opposition, but after an hour or so I was convinced he was leading us in the wrong direction, and in this opinion I was confirmed when in a little while we came to a creek I was pretty sure was the Manahuila, the same we had crossed the day after leaving Goliad. I told Holliday I was confident he was taking the back track, but he thought not, and so we kept on until toward evening, when we came to several groves of

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live oak timber which I remembered having seen when hunting in the vicinity of Goliad. Holliday, however, had but little faith in my recollections of the locality, and proposed that Brown and myself should wait in one of these groves until he reconnoitered the country ahead, and we consented to do so.

In about an hour he returned and told us that he had been in sight of Goliad, and that he had distinctly heard the beating of drums and the bugle calls of cavalry in the town. We felt very much discouraged, as may well be supposed, to find ourselves, after traveling so long, almost at the same point we had started from; but it was useless to repine, and we set out again in the right direction, Holliday, as usual, leading the way. After an hour or so I found that Holliday was gradually turning his course toward Goliad again. Time with us was too precious to be wasted. I came to a halt and told Holliday I would follow him no farther. He insisted he was going the right direction, and I as positively that he was going directly contrary to the course we ought to pursue. He was obstinate, and so was I. Holliday, I knew, had been born and raised in a city whilst I had lived the greater part of my life on the frontier, and had been accustomed to the woods ever since I was old enough to carry a gun. Besides, I knew that I possessed to a considerable degree what frontiersmen call "hog-knowledge," by which is meant a kind of instinctive knowledge that enables some people to steer their way through pathless woods and prairies without a compass or any landmarks to guide them. I therefore told Holliday, if he persisted in traveling in the direction he was going, we would certainly have to part company, although I was very loath to do so under the circumstances. Thereupon and without further parley I turned and took the opposite course to the one we had been traveling. Brown, who made no pretensions to being a woodman, followed me, for the reason, I suppose, that he had lost confidence in Holliday as a guide, and thought possibly I might do better. Holliday remained standing where we had left him, apparently undetermined what to do, until we had gone perhaps a hundred yards, when he turned and followed us. As he came up he merely said that he would rather go wrong than part company, and no allusion afterwards was made to the subject,—but from that time on I always took the lead as a matter of course.

Re crossing the Manthuala creek, and night coming on shortly afterwards, we encamped by the side of a pool of water in a thick "island" of timber. By this time we were suffering greatly with hunger, nevertheless I slept soundly through the night, although in my slumbers I was constantly tantalized by dreams of juicy steaks, hot biscuits and butter, etc., which always mysteriously disappeared when I attempted to "grab" them.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning we again took our course across the prairie, but owing to the rank growth of grass with which in many parts it was covered, and our increasing weakness, our progress was slow and painful. On the way, Holliday found about a dozen wild onions, which he divided with Brown and myself; but the quantity for each was so small that it seemed only to aggravate the pangs of hunger. During the day, we saw in the distance several parties of Mexicans or Indians, we could not tell which, as they only came near enough for us to see that they were men on horseback.

That night we again encamped in a strip of woods bordering a small creek, but we slept very little on account of our sufferings from hunger, which had now become excruciating. The next morning Brown was so weak he could scarcely walk two hundred yards without stopping to rest, nevertheless we went on as fast as we could travel. A part of the way was over high rolling prairie, on which no water could be found, and the pangs of thirst were added to those of hunger, until alleviated by the juice of some "Turks heads" which we found growing on the top of a pebbly knoll. These plants are, I believe, a species of the cactus, about the size of a large turnip, grow on top of the ground, and are protected on the outside by a number of tough, horny prickles. The inside is filled with a spongy substance, which when pressed yields a quantity of tasteless juice that answers as a tolerable substitute for water.

The evening of the fifth day after leaving Goliad, we descried a long line of timber ahead of us, and just before sunset we came to a large stream, which from my knowledge of the geography of the country I was sure must be the Guadalupe. At the point where we struck it, the prairie extended up to the bank, which was high and very steep. A few hundred yards above us we saw a cow and her calf grazing near the edge of the bluff, and approaching them cautiously we attempted to drive them over it, hoping that one or the other would be disabled or killed by the fall, but after several ineffectual efforts to force them to take the leap, they finally broke through our line and made their way to the prairie, taking with them some steaks we stood very much in need of.

Completely exhausted by our exertions, and suffering extremely from hunger, we looked around for a suitable place to camp, as it was now nearly night, and coming to a pit or sink twelve or fourteen feet deep, which would protect us from the cold wind blowing at the time, we built a fire at the bottom, laid down upon the leaves, and in a little while we all went to sleep. How long I had slept I do not know, but I was at length aroused from my slumbers by a rattling among the sticks and dry leaves above me, and looking

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up I discovered a wild sow with her litter of pigs coming down the almost perpendicular bank of the sink. I silently grasped a billet of wood lying near me, and awaited their approach. The old sow came on, totally unsuspecting that three ravenous chaps were occupying her bed at the bottom (for by this time our fire had burnt out), and when she and her pigs were in striking distance I suddenly sprang up and began a vigorous assault upon the pigs. The noise aroused Brown and Holliday, and comprehending at once the state of affairs they sprang to my assistance, and before the sow and her pigs could make their escape up the steep sides of the pit we had "bagged" five of the latter. We made a desperate attack on the old sow also, but weak as we were from starvation, and with our inefficient weapons, she routed us completely, leaving us however in possession of the field and the "spoils of war." We immediately started our fire again, and with no other preparation than a slight roasting on the coals, enough to singe off their hair, we very expeditiously disposed of the five pigs we had killed—nearly a pig and a half for each one, but then you must remember that they were small sucking pigs, and that we had not had a mouthful to eat for five days except a handful of wild onions. Greatly refreshed by our supper of scorched pig, we laid down again upon the leaves at the bottom of the sink, and slept soundly until the sun was an hour or so high.

As soon as we awoke, we left the sink and went out to make a reconnoissance of the river, to see what the chances were for crossing it. Though not very wide at that point, we soon perceived we had a difficult job to undertake, for the river was much swollen by recent rains, and its turbid waters were rushing along at a rapid rate. Holliday and I were both good swimmers, and I felt sure we could reach the opposite bank safely; but I had my doubts about Brown. He was a poor swimmer, and consequently was timid in water. However, there was no alternative but to make the attempt, and we therefore stripped off our clothes, tied them in a bundle on our heads to keep them as dry as possible, and plunged in the turbid flood. Holliday and I soon reached the opposite bank, but hardly had we done so when I heard Brown cry out for help, and looking back I saw that he was still some distance from the shore, and evidently just on the eve of going under. At the very point where I landed there happened to be a slab of dry timber lying near the water, which I instantly seized, and swimming with it to the place where Brown was struggling to keep his head above the surface, I pushed the end of the slab to him, which he grasped and to which he held on with the usual tenacity of a drowning man, and with the assistance of Holliday I at last got him to the shore and dragged him out of the water. It was very fortunate for Brown that Holliday and I, between us, had taken his clothes, as otherwise no doubt he would have lost them all.

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Continuing our course, we passed through a heavily timbered bottom more than a mile wide, and then came to a large prairie in which we saw many herds of deer and some antelopes. The antelope is a beautiful animal about the size of a deer, but much more fleet. They do not run as deer do, by springs or bounds, but evenly, like the horse. Their horns consist of two curved shafts, with a single prong to each. A man on a good saddle horse can easily overtake a fat deer on the prairie, but it would require a thorough bred racer with a light rider to come up with an antelope.

We also saw to-day a party of Indians on horses, but we eluded them by concealing ourselves in some tall grass that grew in the bottom of a ravine. About dusk we came to the timber on the farther side of the prairie, in which we encamped under the spreading branches of a live oak tree.

Next morning we continued our route, and after passing through some open post oak woods, we came to a small stream not more than knee deep, and of course easily forded. Crossing this stream, we went through more post oak woods, and then entered another large prairie, and it was late in the evening, owing to the difficulty of making our way through tall and tangled grass, before we reached the timber on the opposite side, where we encamped in a little open space surrounded by a dense growth of underwood. Here we made a fire, and slept soundly till morning.

As soon as daylight appeared we were off again, and passing through a skirt of woods we came to another small stream, which was also fordable. Crossing it, we entered a large prairie, on the opposite side of which a long line of timber was dimly visible in the distance. All day long, stopping occasionally to rest, we toiled through the matted grass with which this prairie was covered, and just at sunset we came to the woods we had seen, where we encamped near a pool of water. Whilst collecting a supply of fuel for the night, I came upon a heap of brush and leaves, and scraping of the top to see what was beneath, I discovered about half the carcass of a deer which apparently had been recently killed and partly eaten by a panther or Mexican lion, and the remainder "cached" in this heap for future use. Of course, under the circumstances, I had no scruples about appropriating the venison, and calling Brown and Holliday to my assistance we carried it to camp, where, after cutting off the ragged and torn portions of the meat, we soon had the balance spitted before a blazing fire. After making a hearty supper on our stolen venison, we raked a quantity of dry leaves close to the fire and "turned into bed."

During the night, at various times, we heard the roaring of a Mexican lion (very probably the lawful owner of the larder that had supplied us with supper), and for fear he might be disposed

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to make a meal of one of us in place of venison, we took good care not to let our fire burn down too low. There is no animal, I believe, on the American continent, with the exception of the grizzly bear, that has ever been known to attack a man sleeping near a fire. The Mexican lion is, I think, described in books of natural history under the name of puma or South American lion. They are of a tawny or dun color, about the size of the East Indian tiger, have a large round head and a short mane upon the neck. Their nails are very long, sharp and crooked—coming to an edge on the inner side—as keen as that of a knife. Their roar is very similar to that of the African lion. They are fierce and strong, but cowardly; although when pressed by hunger, they have been known to attack men in open daylight. One instance of this comes within my own knowledge. Several teamsters, with their wagons, were traveling the road from San Antonio to Victoria, and a teamster needing a staff for his ox whip, went to a thicket eighty or hundred yards from the road to cut one; whilst occupied in cutting down a small sapling with his pocket knife, a Mexican lion stealthily crawled up behind him and sprang upon him before he was aware of its presence. The man's cries for help were heard by one of the teamsters, who hurried to his assistance. The only thing he had in the shape of a weapon was his ox whip, but with that he boldly attacked the lion, which, frightened by his approach and the loud popping of the whip, let go its prey and made a rapid retreat, but the poor fellow he had caught was dreadfully bitten and torn, and it was a long time before his wounds were healed. The Mexican lion is now rarely seen in Texas except among the dense chapparals between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers.

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CHAPTER XII.

AS soon as it was fairly light we again started, and passing through a heavily timbered bottom, came to the Lavaca or Cow river, a small stream about thirty yards wide where we struck it. In going through the bottom we noticed several piles of rails and some clapboards, the first indications we had seen of settlements since we left Goliad. We also saw a drove of hogs in the bottom, which confirmed us in the opinion that there had been an American settlement somewhere in the vicinity. These hogs were of the genuine "razorback" species, and as wild and fleet as deer; consequently, although our hunger was almost as pressing as ever, we did not care to exhaust our strength in what we knew would be a hopeless attempt to capture one of them.

We swam the river without difficulty, and stopped an hour or so on the bank to rest ourselves and dry our clothes. We then went on, but as the bottom on that side was very wide, and the day being cloudy, we lost our way and it was nearly sunset when we reached the open prairie. A few hundred yards below where we came out of the timber we observed ten or a dozen horses "staked," and, on approaching them, we heard people talking in the woods near by. I advised an immediate retreat from the locality, but for some reason Holliday came to the conclusion that the horses belonged to a company of Texan scouts, and proposed that we conceal ourselves in a clump of bushes from whence we could see any one who might come to look after them and thus satisfy ourselves without running any risk as to whether the owners were Americans or Mexicans. Holliday's counsel prevailed, and Brown and I hid ourselves in a small bunch of bushes and Holliday in another. A dog which was at the camp, all this time kept up an incessant barking, and probably it aroused the suspicions of the owners that some one was trying to steal their horses; at any rate, in a few moments after we had hidden ourselves, a strapping "ranchero" came out of the timber, and when he had looked to see if the horses had been disturbed in any way, he came as straight as he could walk to the bunch of bushes in which Brown and myself had taken our position and was just on the eve of entering it when he saw us. He instantly sprang back exclaiming, "Hey! Americanos! What are you doing here? Do you want to steal our horses?" He then made signs for us to follow him, which we did, knowing that resistance, weak as we were and without arms, would be useless, and that one shout from the ranchero would bring those in camp to his assistance. Holliday, as I have said, was concealed in a separate clump of bushes, and, keeping quiet, the ranchero did not discover him. Brown and I got up and followed him, but I was fully determined from the start not to follow him as far as his camp. I saw that his

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course would take him very close at one point to the timbered bottom, and as we went along Brown and I agreed upon a plan to escape from our captor, which was to follow him quietly until near the timber, and then suddenly "break ranks" and get under cover as speedily as possible. Then we were to take different directions and meet at the same place the next morning. The rancho, although he could plainly see that Brown and I were unarmed, kept some paces ahead of us all the time, every now and then looking back to see if we were following. Before Brown and I separated I told him I would meet him at the Mexican camp the next morning, as it was probable they would leave it before we could return there.

In pursuance of our plan, as soon as we came very close to the edge of the timber, we suddenly left our rancho without even saying "adios," and in a moment we were hidden from his sight by the dense undergrowth. When we thus so unceremoniously left our new acquaintance we were so near the camp that we could plainly hear the rancheros conversing with each other, and the moment we made a "break" our escort shouted to his companions to hasten to his assistance. "Here are Americans, come quick and bring your guns," but just at this juncture Brown and I had some little matters of our own that required immediate despatch, and we did not wait for the Mexicans "to come and bring their guns with them." Brown went one way and I another as soon as we entered the timber, and I never saw him again until several weeks afterwards when he came to the army on the Brazos.

The sun had just set when we entered the timber, and night soon set in dark and cloudy. After going perhaps a mile, I concluded it would be impossible for the Mexicans to find me and I pitched my camp, which was speedily done by pitching myself on the ground at the foot of a tree on which there was a thick growth of Spanish moss, that served to protect me in a measure from a drizzling rain that commenced falling. I did not dare to start a fire for fear the light from it might bring the Mexicans to the locality, should they be in pursuit.

I had never felt so despondent since making my escape from Goliad as I did that night. My separation from my companions, my uncertainty as to their fate, the thought of my helpless situation, without arms of any kind to protect myself against the attacks of wild beasts and still more merciless Mexicans and Indians, together with the mournful howling of wolves in the distance, all conspired to fill my mind with gloomy forebodings and anticipations. However, notwithstanding such unpleasant thoughts and surroundings, I soon fell asleep and slept soundly until morning.

When I awoke day was beginning to break, birds were singing and squirrels chattering in the trees. The rain had ceased, and after brushing off the damp leaves that adhered to my clothes, my

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toilet was made, and I started back in the direction of the place where Brown and I had separated. I came out of the bottom very near the place where I had entered it the evening before, but no living thing was visible on the prairie as far as I could see, except some herds of deer and a flock of wild turkeys. I proceeded cautiously along the edge of the timber until I came to where the Mexicans had staked their horses. They were gone, and hearing no sounds from the woods in which they had camped, I ventured in to reconnoitre. Their fires were still burning, but the camp was deserted and there was nothing left to indicate the probable fate of my companions.

I was exceedingly hungry, and I searched the camp closely, hoping the Mexicans might have forgotten some remnant of their provisions when they went off, but I found no vestiges of eatables of any kind except a few egg shells. Leaving the camp, I returned to the prairie and traveled up and down the timber above and below it for several miles hoping to meet with one or the other of my companions. I continued my search for them until late in the evening, when having abandoned all hopes of finding them, I struck out across the prairie in the direction I intended going. Before I had gone a quarter of a mile I happened to look back towards the river and saw a house that had been hidden from my view, when searching for my companions, by a strip of timber. As I was suffering much from hunger, I concluded to return and make an examination of this house and premises, hoping I might find something to eat.

I approached the house cautiously for fear it might be occupied by a marauding party of Mexicans, but seeing nothing to excite my suspicions, I ventured up. Everything about the house—furniture broken and strewn in fragments over the floor, beds ripped open and their contents scattered around, plainly indicated that it had been visited by some plundering band of rancheros or Indians. However, in an outhouse near the main building, I found a piece of bacon and four or five ears of corn. The corn, I ground upon a steel mill that was fastened to a post in the yard, and starting a fire in one of the chimneys of the main building, I very soon prepared a substantial meal of "ash cake" and broiled bacon, to which I paid my sincere respects. By this time night had set in, and, spreading some tattered bed cloths left in the house upon the floor, I slept comfortably until morning.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE next morning, after making a hearty breakfast on ash cake and bacon, as there was no urgent necessity for hurrying forward, I concluded I would make another attempt to find my companions, and I again traveled for several miles above and below, along the edge of the timber, but seeing nothing of them I at length became satisfied that they had been captured by the Mexicans, or had gone on without waiting for me. The facts were, however, as I afterwards learned from both of them when I subsequently met them on the Brazos, about as follows: After Brown and I broke away from the rancho and went off in different directions, he pursued Brown, came up with him and took him back to the camp. There they tied him securely to a tree, and then proceeded leisurely to cook and eat their supper. Brown, who could speak a little Spanish, told them he was starving and begged them to give him something to eat, but they said it was useless to do so as they intended to shoot him in the morning. He then told them if such was their intention to shoot him at once and not keep him tied up to a tree like a dog all night, but the Mexicans paid no attention to his request and when they had finished their supper, they laid down upon their blankets and went to sleep. Brown tried his best to untie himself, but the rancho had fastened him so securely to the tree that he found it impossible to get loose, and was compelled to remain in a standing position all night.

The next morning, as soon as it was fairly light, one of the rancheros walked up to Brown and pinned a piece of white cloth to his breast, telling him it was a mark for them to shoot at. Four or five rancheros then stationed themselves a few paces in front of him, cocked their guns and presented them as if about to shoot. All this time, Brown, who had been rendered perfectly desperate by pain and hunger, was cursing the Mexicans as much as his imperfect knowledge of the language would permit. He told them they were a set of cowardly scoundrels, and that the bravest feat they had ever performed was the murder of unarmed and helpless prisoners, and so on. Brown said he was suffering and had suffered so excruciatingly from pain and hunger all night that he really wanted the Mexicans to shoot him and put him out of his misery, but they seemed much astonished at his boldness and sang froid, and the one in command of the party came to where he was tied, cut the ropes and told him to go, that he was "muy bravo" (very brave), and that in place of shooting him they would leave him to perish of hunger. Then they saddled their horses and mounting them rode off. Some days afterwards Brown was again captured by a party of Mexicans, but in some way he managed to escape from them, and finally, more by good luck than anything else, for he was a poor woodman, he made his way to the army on the Brazos.

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Holliday, as I have before stated, was not seen when the rancho captured Brown and myself, and as soon as it was dark he left his hiding place and took his course across the prairie. Subsequently he had many narrow escapes from marauding parties of Mexicans and Indians. On one occasion a party of Mexicans pursued him so closely that he took refuge in a lake. He waded on until the water was up to his neck, when the Mexicans amused themselves for some time by firing off their scopets at his head, but fortunately for Holliday night came on, and under cover of the darkness he skipped out and dodged his pursuers.

Another time, two runaway negro men caught him in a house to which he had gone in search of something to eat. They asked him if he was a Texan, and upon his replying in the affirmative they told him they intended to kill him. Whereupon they tied him securely in the room and went out, but in a few moments returned, each one with a heavy club in his hand, and they told him to say his prayers speedily, as they were going to beat out his brains. Holliday, however, "reasoned" the matter with them, telling them it wasn't fair to kill him for what other white men might have done to them—that he had never injured them in any way, etc. His talk seemed to produce some effect upon one of the negroes, but the other still insisted on killing him. Finally, however, the one who was inclined to favor him prevailed upon the other to abandon his intention of beating out his brains, and they said they would not kill him but would take him to the camp of some Mexican guerrillas near by. Holliday thought that this would be worse than "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire;" that such a proceeding would not be better than having his brains knocked out,—and he urged all the arguments he could think of against it. At length, much to Holliday's relief, they agreed to let him go, and before they left they not only gave him provisions, but directions that enabled him to make his way through an unknown country to the Texan army under General Houston. He came into Columbia, on the Brazos, about ten days after I did. Holliday was subsequently appointed to a captaincy in the Texas regular army, was again taken prisoner in the unfortunate Santa Fe expedition, carried to the City of Mexico, and, after his liberation, died of yellow fever on the voyage from Vera Cruz to New Orleans, and was buried at sea.

Giving up all hopes of finding my companions, I started out across the large prairie that extended in the direction I was going as far as my eye could reach. The game on this prairie was more abundant than I had seen it elsewhere. I am sure that frequently there were a thousand deer in sight at a time. Here, too, I first saw the pinnated grouse, or prairie hen. At first I supposed the call of the cock was the distant lowing of wild cattle, some of which were grazing on the prairie. Wild turkeys were also numerous, and

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so unused to the sight of man, that they permitted me at times to approach within a few paces of them.

During the day I saw several parties of Mexicans or Indians on horses, but they did not come near me. About three o'clock in the evening I reached the timber on the Navidad, where I stopped to rest a while and lunch on some of the ash cake and bacon I had brought along with me. I then proceeded on my course through the bottom, and after going probably half a mile I came to the Navidad river, at that place thirty or forty yards wide. It was swollen by recent rains and not fordable, so I was compelled to swim it, which I did easily, stripping of my clothes and tying them on a piece of dry wood, and pushing it before me as I swam.

As soon as I reached the bank I dressed myself and continued my course through the bottom, which was much wider on that side. I had gone perhaps half a mile, when my attention was drawn to the continuous barking of a dog in the direction from which I had come. At first I did not notice it particularly, supposing it was some dog left behind by the settlers on the Navidad when they fled from the invading Mexican army. But at length I observed that although I was traveling at a pretty rapid walk the barking of this dog seemed to be nearer and nearer to me, and I suspected he was trailing me and that probably there was some one with him. I therefore hurried on as fast as possible, and in an hour or so came to the open prairie on the north side of the river. All this time I could hear the baying of the dog at apparently about the same distance behind me as when I first noticed it. I was sure then he was trailing me, and never halted for a moment, but continued on my course into the prairie for several hundred yards and then turned short round and retraced my steps to the edge of the timber, where I sprang as far as I could to one side and went down the edge of the timber about a hundred yards to a fallen tree, among the limbs of which I concealed myself, and from whence I could have a distinct view of anything coming out of the bottom at the point I left it.

After I had thus "holed" myself, the barking of the dog grew louder and nearer every moment, and in a little while I saw the dog, followed by three Indians, emerge from the timber, precisely at the point where I had left it. One of the Indians held the dog by a leash, and was armed with a gun, the other two had their bows and lances. If I had been armed, with the poorest pot-metal, muzzle-loading shot-gun that was ever manufactured at Birmingham, I would not have feared them, but as I had no weapon more formidable than the scissor blade given me by Brown, I "laid low" and watched them from my hiding place. When the Indians following the dog came to the place in the prairie from whence I had turned

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back on my trail, the dog lost it of course, but the Indians (taking it for granted, I suppose, that I had gone on in the same direction) urged and led the dog that way until finally they went out of sight. If I had not thrown them off my trail in the manner described, there is no doubt I would have lost my scalp on that occasion, and I took considerable credit to myself for having beaten them at their own game.

I remained but a little while in the hiding place after the Indians left. But the course I wished to travel was the one they had taken, and for that reason, and because my provisions were nearly exhausted, I determined to keep up along the edge of the timber, hoping to find some settlement and replenish my larder. I followed up the margin of the timber for several miles, and at length came to a "clearing," on the opposite side of which I saw a house. I cautiously advanced towards the house until I was satisfied it was not occupied, and that I could venture up with safety. On entering it I found that a marauding party of Mexicans had lately been there and appropriated to their own use whatever there might have been eatable on the premises. I searched the house thoroughly, but could find nothing in the way of "provender."

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CHAPTER XIV.

BY the time I had finished my fruitless search for something to eat the sun was about setting, and as there was a bed in the house, which looked very inviting to me after sleeping so long on the ground, I concluded to accept the invitation and pass the night in it. After a very frugal and unsatisfying repast upon the small remnant of ash cake and bacon in my knapsack, I turned into my bed and was soon fast asleep.

It must have been near midnight when I was aroused by some noise. I listened attentively and soon ascertained that the noise was nothing but the grunting of several hogs that had taken up their quarters under the house whilst I was asleep. The house was set upon blocks, a foot or so above the ground and the space beneath the floor was therefore sufficiently roomy for their accommodation. The floor was made of puncheons or slabs, which were held in their places solely by their weight. Hunger as well as necessity is the mother of invention, and it occurred to me that I might bag one of these porkers by quietly lifting a puncheon immediately above the spot where they were lying and then quickly grabbing the first one I could get hold of.

I therefore got up from my comfortable bed, and after listening awhile to their grunting so as to ascertain what part of the floor they were under, I slowly and noiselessly lifted a slab above them and laid it aside. Thrusting my arm down through the opening I had made, I felt around until my hand came in contact with the leg of a hog, when I suddenly seized it, and the row began. I had got hold of a hog much too large for me to manage well, and found it no easy matter to induce him to come up into my comfortable quarters. He struggled vigorously to get loose, squealing all the while in the most ear-piercing manner, and for some time I thought it very doubtful how the contest would end—whether I would succeed in hauling the hog up into the room, or the hog in dragging me under the floor. But I knew if I “let go” there would be no pork steaks for breakfast, as the other hogs had been frightened by the squealing and struggling, and had left for parts unknown. But the idea of having no steak for breakfast gave me more than my usual strength, and at last, but not until he had cut me severely with his hard hoofs and rasped a good deal of the skin off my knuckles against the sharp edges of the puncheons, I drew him by main “strength and brutality” into the room and replaced the puncheon. I had secured my hog, but how to kill and butcher him was the next question. I had nothing to do it with except one of the blades of the little pair of scissors given me by Brown, and that I knew was totally inadequate for the purpose. I could find nothing in the room that would do, so I slipped out,

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carefully fastening the door after me, to see if there was anything about the premises with which I could dispatch the porker. The moon was shining brightly, and I looked all around for something that would enable me to convert my hog into pork, but could find nothing better than a large maul that had been used for splitting rails, and with this I re-entered the room and made a determined assault upon the hog. The maul, however, was so heavy and unwieldy I could not handle it with sufficient celerity to inflict a stunning blow. Round and round the room we went for a quarter of an hour or more, the hog squealing all the while and his hoofs clattering and rattling on the puncheons and making altogether such a "racket" as might have been heard at the distance of half a mile. At last, however, I got a fair lick at his cranium, which brought him to the floor, where I finished him by continuous "mauling."

When the bloody deed had been committed, I was so completely exhausted that I tumbled back on the bed, was asleep in a few moments, and did not awake until the sun was high in the heavens. I got up, and the first thing I did was to drag my hog to a spring near the house, where I butchered him after a fashion, with a piece of broken drawing knife I picked up in the yard. After finishing this job I started a fire, and roasted four or five pounds of the pork for breakfast. When I had breakfasted, I packed as much of the pork as I could carry in my knapsack, and started up the bottom again, keeping close to the edge of the timber so that I might readily take shelter in the event that I should meet with a party of Mexicans or Indians. I had come to the conclusion by this time that previously I had been steering my course too low down the country, and I thought it best to keep up the river some distance before I resumed it again, in order to avoid the lagoons and swamps which I supposed abounded in the vicinity of the coast.

I traveled five or six miles without seeing anything worthy of note, and at noon stopped an hour or so at a pool of water to rest and cook some of my pork, and to "barbecue" the remainder so as to prevent it from spoiling. It was late in the evening before I started again, and about sunset, not finding another house, I concluded to encamp in a point of timber near a pool of water.

Just after I had turned into a bed of dry grass for the night, I saw a light spring up, apparently five or six hundred yards above, on the edge of the bottom, and concluded to get up and see what caused it. The moon had not as yet made her appearance, and I thought I could reconnoiter the locality with safety, even if the light should prove to be from the camp fire of Mexicans or Indians. Guided by the light, which continued to shine steadily, I went perhaps a quarter of a mile, when I saw that it came from the chinks of a small log cabin. I approached it silently, and when near it, I saw there were several other cabins near it, but no lights

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were visible in them. The chinks between the logs of the cabin in which the light was shining were all open, and I carefully crept to the side nearest me and peeped through one of them. I had heard for some time a queer kind of rasping sound proceeding from within the cabin, for which I could not account until I looked through the chink, and then I saw a Mexican soldier sitting on the floor, shelling corn into a tub, which he did by rasping the ears on the edge. He had on his shot pouch and powder horn, but his gun I noticed was leaning against the wall next to me, and as there was an opening between two of the logs it was leaning against wide enough to shove my arm through, it occurred to me that possibly I might be able to draw the gun through this opening before the Mexican was aware that any one was in the vicinity, as his back was turned towards me. So I reached in, seized the gun cautiously, near the muzzle, and began to draw it slowly through the chink between the logs. There is no doubt I would have succeeded in my attempt to get the gun, but when the barrel was fairly outside and I felt sure I had secured the prize, to my great disappointment the breech was so large that it stuck hard and fast between the logs. In my effort to pull the gun through, I unavoidably made some noise that attracted the attention of the soldier, and he turned and uttered an exclamation of fear and astonishment when he saw his gun thus mysteriously disappearing through the chink in the cabin, and he instantly sprang forward and clutched it by the breech.

The noise aroused three or four dogs sleeping near the cabin, and they began to bay me furiously. I was sure there were more Mexican soldiers in the adjoining houses, and thinking I might find a "healthier" location than the one where I was, I made off at "double quick" for the bottom, closely pursued by the dogs. When I reached the timber, I picked up a club, turned upon the dogs and drove them back. I heard a good deal of shouting and "carahooing" at the cabins, but as the night was quite dark I had no fear of being pursued, and leisurely took my way along the edge of the timber. When I had got I suppose a mile from the cabins, I went into the timber and encamped in a secure place.

My failure to get the soldier's gun was a great disappointment to me. Every house I had visited since I struck the settlements, I had searched closely for a gun, hoping that one might have been left by the occupants when they hurriedly fled before the invading army, but my search was always fruitless. People had abandoned a great deal of valuable property, but whatever arms they had they carried off. I had an abundance of ammunition, for at one of the houses I had searched I found powder and shot, which I secured, and all I lacked was a gun. I would willingly have given all the money I

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had in the world (amounting to seventy-five cents in specie) for the poorest pot-metal gun that was ever manufactured, and taken the chances of its bursting whenever I fired it.

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CHAPTER XV.

JUST at daylight I was aroused from my slumbers by the clucking and gobbling of wild turkeys. I had encamped very near a large "roost," and as I made no fire I had not disturbed them. Many of the trees in the vicinity were literally filled with them, and they were so tame I could easily have killed one with a bow and arrow if I had had them, and I determined I would try my hand at manufacturing these primitive weapons, if I could find some suitable tool to work with.

After I had reconnoitered from the edge of the timber and ascertained that there were no Mexicans in sight, went on up the bottom three or four miles, and then struck across the prairie in the direction I had been traveling. My route was through an open prairie interspersed with "mots" or groves of timber. In one of these I stopped about noon, and broiled a piece of my pork for dinner. After resting an hour or so I continued on my way, and about sunset came to some timber bordering a small stream. I had scarcely entered this timber, which was open and free from undergrowth, when I noticed several large wolves trotting along behind me. Every now and then they set up a howl, which was answered by others in the distance, and before long numbers of them had gathered around me, attracted, I suppose, by the howling of those I had first seen, or by the smell of the fresh meat I had with me. I had no fear of an immediate attack from them, nevertheless, I hurried on as fast as I could until I came to the small stream I have mentioned, on the bank of which I pitched camp, near a large fallen tree that would afford sufficient fuel to keep a fire burning all night. I am confident if I had not had a fire that night, the wolves would have torn me to pieces; as it was, they sometimes ventured up to within a few feet of the fire, howling and snarling, and evidently inclined to make a dash at me at all hazards. It was impossible to sleep, so I took my spite out of them by occasionally throwing a fire brand amongst the crowd. This would silence them for a moment, but they would soon begin their howlings again. Towards daylight they raised the siege and departed, and I got a little nap before sunrise.

To-day, while crossing another large prairie, I saw in the distance a considerable body of Mexicans or Indians, I could not tell which, who were traveling at a rapid rate, and I soon lost sight of them. In this prairie I passed many herds of deer, generally fifty to a hundred in a herd, which were so gentle they frequently permitted me to approach within a few paces of them before they noticed me at all. I also saw several droves of mustangs, which were much wilder than the deer, and invariably whenever I got within five or six hundred yards of them they would raise their heads,

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gaze at me for a few moments, and then with much snorting and "cavorting" they would go off like the wind, and never slacken their speed as long as they were in sight.

In a small grove of timber where I had halted to rest awhile, I saw for the first time a horned frog. I had heard of the tarantula and centipede of Texas, and supposing the harmless frog was one or the other I picked up a stick about ten feet long (not venturing to approach nearer such a poisonous reptile) and mashed him as flat as a pan-cake.

Continuing my course, about sunset I came to a belt of timber bordering another small stream. On the bank of this stream there was an Indian encampment that appeared to have been occupied a day or so previously. Several of their fires were still smoking, and from their number I supposed there were thirty or forty in the party. Around these fires was scattered a great quantity of bones, mostly those of deer, though the head of a mustang here and there showed that they varied their diet by an occasional feast on horse flesh.

A cold misting rain had begun to fall just before I came to this camp, and seeing it was likely to continue through the night, I took possession of a shanty built of small poles and covered with slips of bark. In this I stowed myself and baggage and made myself perfectly "at home." With a large fire in front of it and plenty of hog, but no hominy, I passed a very comfortable night, serenaded as usual by wolves.

Next morning the rain had ceased, and the sun was shining brightly when I woke up. Cooking a piece of my pork, I made a hasty breakfast for fear the owner of the shanty might return and ask me to pay for my night's lodging, and again started on my journey.

During the day I saw several "signal smokes," made I suppose by Indians, but they were a long way off. These signal smokes are curious things. Often when traveling over the plains of Western Texas, I have seen a column of smoke rise perpendicularly into the air (no matter how strong the breeze might be blowing) to a great height, when it would spread out at the top like an umbrella, and after remaining stationary for a moment "puff" it would suddenly disappear, to be answered perhaps by another, twenty or thirty miles away. They are no doubt intended for signals to warn others of the proximity of foes, and to indicate their own position. I have asked many old frontiersmen how it was the Indians made smokes, but none of them could ever explain the matter satisfactorily to me. I have occasionally seen four or five of these signal smokes rising up in various directions at the same time.

To-day, for the first time, I saw what I know now was a tarantula, a very large and exceedingly venomous spider, that

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haunts the dry and elevated prairies of Western Texas. They are not often seen in the timbered lands or in the immediate vicinity of settlements. The body of a full grown one is as large as a hen's egg, and is covered with scattering hairs or bristles. They have two curved fangs protruding from the mouth, about as long and very similar in appearance to those of the rattlesnake. When provoked they are very pugnacious, rising upon their hind legs and springing towards the assailant five or six inches at a time in successive leaps. The Mexicans say their bite is certain death, and one can readily credit the assertion after seeing them.

I made but little if any progress to-day, for not long after I had started it clouded up and commenced misting again, so that I lost sight of the timber towards which I was steering my course. Finally I became completely bewildered and after wandering about all day I came to a belt of timber I had good reason to suppose was the same I had started from in the morning. At any rate the sun just then showed itself for a few moments, and I found I was traveling in the direction directly opposite the one I should have pursued.

It was too late to take the prairie again, and I picked out a suitable place for camp, started a fire and cooked some of my pork for supper, which for want of salt was getting to be rather too much tainted to suit the taste of any one but a Frenchman. During the night the wolves favored me with another concert of howlings, but they were much less impudent than upon a former occasion, and did not approach near enough to enable me to salute them with fire brands.

In the morning I rose betimes, and unpacking all the pork I had left, I spitted it on sticks stuck up before a blazing fire. I thought by roasting it in this way to keep it from spoiling entirely. The clouds had blown off and the sun shone out warm and pleasant, and having eaten some of my roasted pork which had decidedly too much of the "gout," I started out again across the open prairie. This time I made the trip without difficulty, and about mid-day I came to a small stream which I afterwards learned was called the Tres Palacios or Three Palaces. How it acquired the name I cannot say, but I am sure I saw no palaces in its vicinity. Where I crossed it, I noticed a few small cedar trees growing near the bank, and I determined to cut one of them down and make a bow. This was no small job, as you may suppose, considering I had nothing to cut it with except a small piece of the blade of a drawing knife—the same I had found at the house where I killed the hog, and which I had carried in my knapsack ever since. By the time I cut the sappling down, I was both tired and hungry, so I knocked off work to rest a while and cook some pork. I then resumed my task, and chopping off about six feet from the

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butt end of the sapling I split it into four pieces with a wooden wedge and maul. From these I selected the one that was freest from knots and other defects, out of which, by patience and perseverance and with the aid of my piece of drawing knife I manufactured a very good bow. Arrows I knew I could easily get anywhere in the bottoms among the thickets of swamp dog wood or young cane. By the time my bow was finished night came on, and I pitched my camp near the creek in a little open space completely surrounded by a thick growth of underwood. Here I built my fire, warmed over some of my roasted pork, and after supper "turned in" to a bed of Spanish moss which I had gathered from a tree near by.

The next morning I gave the finishing touches to my bow and then for the first time it occurred to me that I had nothing that would answer for a string. I tried to make one of the bark of several shrubs, and of the leaves, of bear grass, but although I taxed my ingenuity to the utmost, I failed to make a cord strong enough for the bow, and I had at last to abandon the attempt altogether.

This was a great disappointment to me as I had calculated largely on supplying myself with an abundance of small game by means of my bow. I had heard of people having "two strings to their bows," and yet under the most pressing necessity I was unable to get one for mine—which convinces me that things are very unequally divided in this world.

The day was so far gone when I had finished my unsuccessful attempt at cord making, that I thought it best to remain where I was for the night and make a fresh start in the morning. It must have been twelve or one o'clock, when something awoke me, and finding that my fire had pretty well gone out, I was just in the act of getting up to throw some sticks on it, when I heard the stealthy but heavy tread of some large animal near by. I laid still and listened attentively, and was convinced there was some heavy animal cautiously approaching the spot where I was lying. Just then, fortunately probably for me, a chunk rolled off a log I had placed behind the fire, and blazed up brightly. By the light thus made, I saw distinctly either a large panther or Mexican lion, not twenty feet distant, crouching down as if about to spring upon me. I instantly jumped, and seizing my "bed clothes" (the dry Spanish moss I had gathered) I threw it on the fire and it blazed up at once as high as my head. This must have frightened the animal, whatever it was, for when I turned to look it was gone. Possibly it did not intend to attack me, but the way in which it had approached me, was to say the least of it very suspicious. The loss of my "bed clothes" did not discommode me much, as I sat up the balance of the night to keep my fire supplied with fresh fuel, although the night was quite warm.

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CHAPTER XVI.

AS soon as the sun rose, I made haste to leave the locality where I had passed such an unpleasant night. Late in the evening I came to an extensive body of timber, in which I supposed I would find a considerable stream. On the edge of this timber I saw a house, and as by this time what remained of my pork was so strong of the "gout" that I don't think even a Frenchman would have relished it, I determined to go to the house and search for something to eat. I entered the woods some distance below it, and kept under cover until I was near enough to see there was no one about, when I ventured up. On entering I soon saw that it had been ransacked by the Mexicans, who had consumed or taken away whatever there might have been in it in the way of eatables. In the vicinity, however, as I was leaving, I came across a half-grown hog, which evidently had very recently been shot by some one, who had taken only a small part of it, and I appropriated as much of what was left as I could conveniently carry. As the sun was about setting, I went some distance into the timber, so that the light from my fire would not be visible to any one passing along the prairie, where I "bivouacked" for the night at the foot of a tree.

By sunrise I was up and on my way again, crossing in a mile or so a considerable creek. To-day I passed over a country mostly prairie, but interspersed here and there with groves of live oaks, hackberry, etc., which gave it a park like appearance. In one of these groves, thickly settled with underbrush, I stopped to rest, and was just in the act of leaving it, when I heard the tramping of horses' hoofs and the jangling of spurs and other accoutrements. Looking through the bushes I saw about twenty Indians slowly jogging along in single file upon their horses. They had no guns and were armed only with bows and lances. They rode within thirty paces of where I was lying—low, but did not halt, and in a few moments they were hid from my view by another grove. I remained where I was half an hour longer than I would have done otherwise, in order to give these Indians full time to get out of my way, and then proceeded on my course. A little before sunset I came to a clear running creek, on the farther side of which I encamped. (At that time, all the creeks and small water courses, and even the ponds in Western Texas were clear and pure, but now many of them have lost that character to a greater or less extent, owing to the cultivation of adjacent lands and the tramping of stock.)

I had made my camp beneath some low spreading live oaks, which appeared to be a favorite roosting place for wild turkeys. Just at dusk they came flocking into them from every direction, and they were so unused to being hunted, I could easily have killed

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one with a pocket pistol—but as I didn't have the pistol I had to content myself with roast pork instead of roast turkey.

I had noticed before dark that a very extensive prairie lay to the north and east, and I was up and on my way the next morning before daylight, in order that I might reach the timber on the opposite side as speedily as possible. I ran but little risk comparatively when traveling in timber, but on the open prairie I was in constant danger of being picked up by parties of Mexicans or Indians. I pushed on as fast as I could until noon, when I stopped to rest in a grove near a small lagoon that seemed to be well stocked with fish, for I saw numbers of bass and perch swimming in the shallow water near shore. On the margin of this lake I found some wild onions growing, which I dug up and ate raw, and which were a great treat to me, as I had not had anything in the vegetable line, fresh and green, for a long time.

In the evening I continued on my way across the prairie on the farther side of which I could see a long line of unbroken timber stretching from northeast to southwest, as far as my eye could reach. It was nearly night when I came to this timber, and I had gone but a little way in it, when I saw a large river before me, which I knew must be the Colorado. The river was very high and rapid, and I thought it best to encamp for the night and wait until morning before I attempted to swim it. Where I struck it, it was about two hundred yards wide and much swollen by recent heavy rains, and although I was a good swimmer, I felt some hesitation the next morning in "taking water." However, I looked around and found a suitable piece of dead timber, to which I tied my boots and clothes, and launched forth with it on the turbulent stream, pushing it before me as I swam. Finally I made a landing safely on the north bank of the river, but was carried by the strength of the current a considerable distance below the point where I had entered the water.

After resting myself a while and drying my clothes, I took up the line of march again through a heavily timbered bottom about a mile and a half wide, from which I at length emerged into the open prairie. Without halting I continued on my course until late in the evening, when I came to the timber on old Caney Creek. Along this creek, which apparently in times gone by was the bed of the Colorado river, from its head to its mouth, a distance of sixty or seventy miles, there was a continuous cane brake. Where I struck the timber on old Caney, there had been a considerable settlement, as some four or five houses were in sight, but on examination, I found that all of them had been plundered by Mexicans, who had taken everything of any value left on the premises. At one of these houses whilst searching the rooms to see if anything in the way of provisions had been overlooked by the Mexicans, I

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heard a hen "squawking" as if some "varmint" was in pursuit of her. I stepped to the door to look out, and saw a hen racing around the yard and a very large wild cat following her closely. Having seen nothing eatable anywhere, except this hen, I determined to put in a "bid" for her myself, and picking up a billet of wood, I stepped out boldly towards the cat. When he saw me coming, he quit his pursuit of the hen, but showed not the slightest disposition to abandon the field. I advanced to within a few paces of where he stood humping his back and showing his teeth, and threw the stick I had in my hand at his head. I missed my aim, but struck him a severe blow on the side, and instantly he gave a scream and sprang furiously towards me. I retreated precipitately and ingloriously for the house, which I reached just in time to rush into the door and slam it to in the face of the infuriated cat. If I had had a few feet further to go, he would have nabbed me to a certainty. The cat stopped some time in front of the door, as if he intended to besiege me in the house, or was bantering me to come out and give him a fair fight, which, under the circumstances, I declined doing, but after a while he went off leisurely towards the woods and I saw him no more. In the mean time "the bone of contention," the hen, had gone to roost in tree near by. She undoubtedly owed her life to me, but for a very little while, for after dark I climbed up to her roost, grabbed her by the leg, and wrung her neck. With my prize, I retreated as speedily as possible to the house, for fear the wild cat might return and assert his claim to it again, and as I had no weapon I was very sure he would get the better of the contest and the hen too.

I remained all night at this house, and after breakfasting on the hen I had saved from the wild cat, I started off down the bottom to reconnoitre the country in that direction. When I had gone a mile or two I came to a small prairie connected with the main one by a very narrow neck and surrounded everywhere else by thick woods and cane brakes. This I concluded to explore, and after proceeding some distance in it, I saw there was a house at the farther end. When I had approached within a hundred yards of the house, a half a dozen dogs came rushing out of it, seemingly with the intention of tearing me to pieces. I picked up a stick to defend myself, but when the dogs got near enough to see that I was an American, instead of attacking me they began to leap and jump around me as dogs do when they see their master after a long absence. How they found out so quickly I was an American, I do not know, for exposure to sun and weather had tanned my complexion, until it was as dark as that of a Mexican or Indian. With my escort of dogs I went to the house, and entering it, saw at once that the Mexicans had never been there, for everything remained, evidently, just as it had been left by the occupants—furniture untouched, cases filled with books and articles of wearing

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apparel, cribs with corn and smoke house containing at least a thousand pounds of bacon. In a kind of shed room I also found a barrel of brown sugar and half a sack of coffee, and in the crib, besides corn, a quantity of potatoes and pumpkins. There were a great many chickens and ducks in the yard, which no doubt, had been protected from "varmint" by the pack of dogs that still continued to escort me about the premises. In the smoke house as I have said, there was a large quantity of bacon, and the first thing I did was to take a "middling" and cut it up for the dogs. I then built a fire in one of the chimneys and in a little while had cooked for myself a first rate dinner together with a cup of coffee, the first I had tasted since leaving Goliad. After dinner I turned into one of the beds in the house and had a comfortable snooze.

When I awoke I got up and continued my investigations. In a back room I found quite a library, a rare thing at that time in Texas. I found also many articles of clothing in a closet, some of which fitted me tolerably well, and from which without any fear of being arrested for "petit larceny," I replenished my scanty wardrobe. Among other things I found in this house— something I wished for exceedingly—was a gun, but unfortunately it was without a lock, and consequently useless. Not far from the main building there was a row of log cabins, that evidently had served as negro "quarters," which induced me to believe that the place belonged to some well to do cotton planter.

As I had been much weakened by starvation and fatigue and the exposure I had undergone in my route through the wilderness, I concluded I would "stop over" a day or two at this house and recuperate my strength a little before I set out on my journey again. There were beds in several of the rooms, in one of which I slept at night, while my pack of dogs kept watch outside. These dogs were not mongrels or "curs of low degree," neither were they of the "suck egg" breed, as was evident from the fact that although they were in a starving condition when I came, and that the chickens had laid their eggs almost everywhere in the house and yard, not one had been touched by them—for which I was thankrful, being particularly fond of eggs myself.

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CHAPTER XVII.

I remained several days in my comfortable quarters, feasting on the good things I found in them, and reading books I selected from the library. On the evening of the third day of my sojourn at the house, feeling a little unwell (I rather think I had been indulging somewhat too freely in "fried chicken"), I concluded I would take a short stroll around my domains by way of exercise. After going a few hundred yards I turned to take a bird's eye view of my surroundings, and I exclaimed as Crusoe did on his island:

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,"

except, I mentally added, a marauding party of Mexicans or Indians, and now and then a wild cat.

Whilst passing through some tall grass, I came very near treading on a rattlesnake, the first I had seen in Texas, although some portions of the country I had passed over was much infested with them; but the season then was hardly far enough advanced to bring them out of the dens or holes in which they take up their winter quarters. Often since, when passing over some of the uninhabited plains between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers, I have found them so numerous in particular localities, that I was scarcely ever out of hearing of the sound of their rattles. They are not, however, nearly so vicious in Texas as they are in some other countries, and seldom attempt to strike, unless attacked. I have slept with them, ridden and walked over them frequently, and instead of trying to bite me they always did their best to get out of the way—except on one occasion. I was stalking some deer one day on the prairie, when I stepped upon a rattlesnake lying coiled up in the grass. I knew even before I saw it, by the peculiar soft squirming feel under my foot that I had put it on a snake, and I promptly "lit out" without waiting for orders. As I did not wish to shoot him for fear of alarming the deer, and as they are easily stunned by a very slight tap on the head, I drew the ramrod from my rifle and gave his head a smart blow with it. I then mashed his head by repeated blows with the breech of my gun, and thinking of course I had killed him, I went on after the deer. Two days subsequently when passing the place again, that same snake came very near biting me. I knew it was the same, for one of his eyes was out, and his whole head bruised and bloody from the blows I had given it with the breech of my rifle. I really believe he recognized me as the "author of all his ills," for when I attempted to go near him he would raise his head a foot or more from the ground, and with his rattles going incessantly, would glare at me with his one eye in the most vindictive way. I determined to make sure of him this time, and

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leveling my rifle at his head, I took good aim and fired. The bullet knocked his head into fragments, and one of the pieces struck me on the forehead, making a slight wound. The idea immediately occurred to me that I had been struck by one of his fangs, and that I was fated to be killed by this particular snake. However, after bathing the scratch in a pool of water, and finding that my head had not swelled up as big as a bushel, I went on my way, congratulating myself upon my second escape from my vindictive foe.

But to return from this digression, to my story. On the morning of the fourth day of my sojourn at this house, I concluded I had regained my strength sufficiently to take the road once more, or rather the woods and prairies. Preparatory to leaving, I packed up as much sugar, coffee and bacon as I could carry, together with five or six pounds of meal, which I had ground upon a steel mill. I also put a tin cup in my knapsack, and several other articles which I thought would be useful to me. When ready to start I stuck a couple of carving knives (which I had also found at this house) in my belt, and, bidding adieu to my dogs, after I had given them middlings enough to last them for a month, I set out on my travels again. But, to my great dismay, when I had got a few hundred yards from the house, I found I had not consulted the wishes of the dogs about leaving them, and that the whole pack was following close at my heels—suspecting, I suppose, from the preparations they had seen me making, that I was going “for good.” I tried to drive them back by throwing sticks and other things at them, but it was all to no purpose. They would stop whenever I did, but the minute I started they followed on. I knew it would be impossible for me to travel safely through a country in which I would be liable at any time to meet marauding parties of Mexicans and Indians with a half dozen dogs at my heels, and finding I could not get rid of them, I determined to go back to the house, wait there until night, and then quietly leave them. So I returned, and passed another day very pleasantly at my house, looking over the books in my library, and cooking and eating at short intervals.

Before I retired to my apartment, I noticed particularly where the dogs were sleeping, and about midnight I got up, quietly shouldered my pack of provisions, and left the house. I had gone perhaps half a mile down the edge of the cane brake when I heard the pattering of feet behind me, and in a few moments one of the dogs came up. I beat him severely with a stick, but he only whined and crouched down at my feet. Finally, I determined to kill him with one of my butcher knives, but as I grasped him by the neck, and drew my carving knife, he looked up at me so piteously that I hadn't the heart to use it, and abandoned my murderous intention. I thought I could manage to keep one dog under control, and that the risk I ran of being killed or captured would not be increased

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to any great extent by having a dog with me; besides, I came to the conclusion that the company of a dog was better than none. Like the Frenchman, I think that solitude is very pleasant at times, provided there is some one with you to whom you can say "how delightful is solitude." The dog that followed me was a very large and powerful one—a cross, I think, between the English bull and the Newfoundland. I found him to be tractable and, at the same time, as courageous as a lion. In a few days I had him perfectly under control; could make him lie down at a word, and remain at camp to guard it when I went off foraging or reconnoitering. I named him Scout.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER traveling a mile or two down the brake, I thought I had gone far enough to get away from the other dogs, and I encamped for the balance of the night near a lagoon. I heard no wolves at this camp, but several times during the night I was roused by the noise made by some large animal forcing its way through the cane. I suppose it was a bear, as I noticed next morning a great many tracks in the soft ooze near the margin of the lagoon.

Whilst lying awake the next morning, upon my bed of dry leaves, my attention was drawn to a rustling among them, and turning them over, I found an ugly reptile about six inches long, which I thought then, and know now, was a centipede. Not fancying such a bed-fellow, I quickly dispatched him with a stick. They resemble somewhat the reptile called the "thousand leg worm," but they are much larger and flatter, and although they are well provided with legs, they have not quite a thousand. They are of a dark brown color on the back, and the under side a dirty white. Their tail is forked, and has a long sting in the end of each prong, besides smaller stings on each foot, and, to complete their means of inflicting wounds, the mouth is furnished with fangs. They are a disgusting looking "varmint," and are said to be very venomous. An old Texan speaking about them, said: "When they wound you with their feet alone, it hurts considerable; when they sting you with their forked tail it's a great deal worse, but when they pop you with all their stings, and bite you too—say your prayers."

As soon as I had cooked and eaten breakfast and Scout had cleaned the dishes by licking them, I began to search again for a road that would lead me across the brake. Failing to find one after searching for several hours along the edge of the brake, I determined, if possible, to cut my way through it. I therefore attacked the cane, green briers and bushes with a carving knife, and after working faithfully till late in the day, I found I had gone about three hundred yards. Such slow progress was exceedingly discouraging, for at that rate, if the brake was as wide as I thought it to be, I would be several weeks getting through it. There were a few scattering trees among the cane, and in order that I might be able to form some idea of the width of the brake, I climbed one of the tallest from whence I could see an ocean of cane, extending at least four miles in the direction I wished to go, and beyond the scope of vision to the Northwest and Southeast. The length of time and the amount of labor that I knew would necessarily be required to cut my way for so long a distance through this dense mass of vegetation, induced me to give over the attempt, and, descending from the tree, I took the path I had cut back to the prairie. Feeling considerably fatigued by my labors, when I got

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to the edge of the brake, I sat down at the root of a large tree to rest awhile. Gradually I fell into a doze, from which I was suddenly aroused by the growling of Scout, and a scuffling, scratching noise overhead, and looking up, I caught a glimpse of some huge black animal sliding down the tree a few feet above my head. I sprang off quickly to one side, and at the same instant a bear struck the ground and took his way into the cane which popped and cracked as if a wagon was going through it. It would be hard to say which was the most frightened, I or the bear, and even Scout was so demoralized by his unexpected appearance that he made no attempt to pursue him. The bear, of course, was up the tree when I took my seat at the foot of it, and as the tree was densely covered with Spanish moss, I had not noticed him. From my protracted stay at the foot of the tree, I suppose bruin had come to the conclusion that I was laying siege to him regularly, and getting desperate, he had charged down upon me in the manner I have related. Had I known it was a bear when I first caught a glimpse of him, I should not have been alarmed, as I had never heard tell of their attacking any one except when wounded and brought to bay.

Several days afterwards, however, two of them exhibited such evident signs of hostile intentions towards me that I was induced to believe that they were not so non-combative as generally supposed.

After this little adventure, I continued on along the edge of the brake, hoping I might find some road or trail leading across it. I examined every nook and indentation, and finally came to quite a large trail leading from the open prairie towards the brake. Along this trail the old traces of wagon wheels were distinctly visible. I followed it for some distance running almost parallel with the brake, and at length came to where it abruptly turned and entered it. After crossing a strip of cane about two hundred yards wide, with a small lagoon near the center of it, spanned by a rude bridge of logs, I came to a small prairie perhaps a mile in length and half a mile wide, a considerable part of which had been in cultivation. At the farther end of this prairie I saw a house, to which the trail I was following seemed to lead. When I had approached to within three or four hundred yards of the house, I halted for a few moments to make sure whether or not there was any one about the premises. I heard the crowing of chicken cocks and the squealing of pigs, but as I saw no smoke issuing from any of the chimneys or any other signs to indicate that the house was occupied, I ventured up. There were a great many chickens, ducks and pigs in the yard, but no dogs came to welcome us. The house was a comfortable log building, consisting of four rooms with a wide passage between them and a broad piazza in front, and was sheltered by some large live oak and pecan trees. Everything in the house

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remained just as it was when abandoned by the occupants, which convinced me that it never had been discovered by the Mexicans. Indeed so secluded was the locality and so completely hidden from view by the strip of tall cane on the lagoon before mentioned, that no one passing along the main prairie outside would have suspected there was a settlement in the vicinity.

This house was furnished even in better style than the one I stopped at last, which together with the number of outhouses and negro quarters, convinced me it had been the residence of a wealthy planter. In the barns and cribs I found a large quantity of corn, potatoes, etc., and plenty of sugar and coffee in a store-room.

By the time I had made a thorough examination of the premises, the day was pretty well spent, and I determined to take up my quarters for the night in the house. Besides, it had clouded up and a cold, misting rain had begun to fall. I therefore proceeded to make myself at home without the least ceremony. I lolled upon the sofa, read the books, smoked a pipe (which the proprietor of the premises had left behind in the hurry of departure, with a box of tobacco), and after I had supped sumptuously on boiled eggs and peach preserves, I turned into a large double bed that looked as if it had just been spread for my special accommodation, and with Scout keeping watch at the door I slept like a prince until the sun was an hour high.

For my breakfast I had fried chicken, ash cake, boiled eggs, coffee and honey. After breakfast, I filled my knapsack with fresh provisions, and bidding adieu as I thought forever to these pleasant quarters, I set out again to search for a road that would lead me across the brake. Little did I think that five days would pass before I bade a final farewell to these quarters—yet such was the fact.

All that day I searched for a road that would lead me across the interminable cane brake that barred my further progress. Occasionally I would fall into a cattle or deer trail leading into it, but they either gave out entirely after penetrating it a short distance, or else split up into half a dozen blind paths that did not seem to lead anywhere or in any particular direction. Wearied and disheartened by my failure to find a road, I returned to my domicile, feasted again on fried chicken, eggs, honey, etc., and again took possession of my double bed for the night.

The next day this same programme was gone through with and the next, and the next, with the same results, and I almost began to despair of ever finding a way through this apparently endless wilderness of cane, briars and brush. However, it was some consolation to me to know that after the fatigues and disappointments of the day, I had such comfortable quarters to fall back upon at night.

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Nevertheless, as I was very anxious to get on as speedily as possible, I left my domicile one morning with the determination that I would follow the brake up to the head of old Caney, providing I could find no road crossing it. I went on up the brake, examining closely every nook and indentation without success, until I had traveled, as I suppose, five or six miles. Here I struck out into the open prairie, to avoid a deep lagoon that lay in the way, and ere long I came to a well beaten road, running almost parallel with the brake. This road had evidently been traveled a day or so previously by a large body of cavalry. I concluded I would follow it a short distance, and was going along leisurely, when I heard the clattering of horses' hoofs behind me, and turning to look, I saw a troop of Mexican lancers advancing rapidly, not more than four or five hundred yards distant. There was not a tree or bush to screen me, nearer than the brake, at least half a mile to my right, and I knew it would be impossible for me to reach it before I was overtaken by the lancers. For a moment I gave myself up for lost, but fortunately on one side of the road there was a patch of rank dead grass, and as there was no time for consideration, I seized Scout by the neck, dragged him twenty or thirty paces into the grass, threw him down and laid myself by his side, holding him tightly by the muzzle to prevent him from growling or barking at the lancers as they passed.

In a few moments they came up and when opposite the place where Scout and I were hidden, they halted. I could see them plainly through the grass, and could hear them talking, but not with sufficient distinctness to understand what was said.

Scout, too, was aware of their proximity, and when they halted he gave a low growl, and tried to get up, but I choked him severely until he lay quiet. The lancers had evidently caught a glimpse of us before we left the road, for after they halted, several dismounted and examined the road for tracks, but luckily at that place the ground was gravelly and hard, and my boots had left no distinct traces on it.

At length, satisfied I suppose they had seen nothing, or what they had seen was only a couple of wolves or wild hogs, those that had dismounted to examine the road for "sign" sprang into their saddles, and they all rode on at a gallop. As soon as I saw they were fairly off, I drew a long breath, and think Scout did so too, for I had choked him until his tongue lolled out. When the lancers had got to a safe distance, I loosened my grasp from his neck and let him up. But he never forgot the lesson I gave him on that occasion, and whenever I wished him to lie down and keep quiet, I had only to place my hand on his neck, when he would crouch down and remain as still as a mouse until I told him to rise. Thankful for what under the circumstances seemed to me almost a

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miraculous escape, I took my way back to the timber, resolved that henceforth I would keep a better look out, and travel as little as possible in daylight, through the open prairies.

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CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN I reached the woods the sun was about setting and as it was too far to think of returning to my "domicil," selected a suitable locality and encamped for the night. During the night several large animals which I suppose to be bear came around camp, and the noise they made in the cane, kept Scout in such constant state of excitement, that I am sure he got but little sleep.

The next morning, I retraced my way down the brake, and about midday reached my quarters, where I found everything as I had left it the day before. After feasting again on fried chicken, sweet potatoes and hot coffee, I took a seat on the porch, with a volume of *Don Quixote* (which I read for the first time at this house), and cocking my feet up on the bannisters, I made myself comfortable for the rest of the evening.

Whilst I was thus taking "mine ease in mine inn," it occurred to me that if Mahomet couldn't get to the mountain, perhaps the mountain might come to Mahomet—in other words, if I couldn't get to the Texan army, perhaps it would be just as well to remain where I was until the Texans whipped the Mexicans and re-occupied the country. That they would do so eventually I had not the slightest doubt, although the Mexicans had told us when prisoners at Goliad (for the purpose of discouraging us and preventing us from making any attempt to escape), that Santa Anna had defeated Gen. Houston's army, and that the whole country was virtually in their possession. But in fact I did not seriously entertain for a moment the idea of remaining any longer where I was, comfortable as were my quarters, than I could possibly help; for I knew very well I would not be satisfied with such an inactive life, when my countrymen were all in the field battling against the merciless foe. So I retired to my sleeping apartment that night with the determination of renewing my search for a road the next morning, and to persevere in it until I succeeded.

During the night I heard the howl of several "lobo" wolves very near the house, but of course I did not fear them within the walls of my castle. The fact is, I did not fear anything except a visit from marauding parties of Mexicans or Indians, against whom neither the log walls of my castle nor my two formidable looking carving knives would have afforded me much protection. Audubon, who is a recognized authority upon the subject of birds, if not of beasts, told me that the lobo was the largest known species of wolf in the world, and certainly they are much larger than any on the American continent. They resemble the hyena in form as much or more than they do that of the common wolf. Their howl is also very different, and when camping out alone on the prairies, it always

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seemed to me to be the most mournful, doleful and "lonesome" sound I ever heard. Several instances have been known since the settlement of Texas of their attacking travelers when benighted on the prairies, and I was once myself with a party of rangers who rescued a wayfarer from their clutches, and who, but for our timely arrival, would undoubtedly have been torn to pieces by them.

Nothing else occurred to disturb me during the night, and the next morning I rose betimes, and as soon as breakfast was over I shouldered my knapsack and set out, intending to make a thorough search for a road along the edge of the brake below. In the bottom to-day I noticed that many of the trees were putting forth their leaves, and indication that spring had fairly set in, and a variety of wild flowers were also beginning to make their appearance on the prairie.

To-day I came across a specimen of the joined snake, the first I had ever seen. It was a small snake, not more than fifteen or twenty inches in length, and its skin had a vitrified or glassy appearance. It seemed to be rather sluggish and unwieldy, and when I struck it a slight tap with a small stick, to my great astonishment, it broke into half a dozen pieces, each piece hopping off in a very lively way "on its own hook." I have since heard it asserted, that after a time the broken parts of the snake will come together and reunite and then crawl off as if nothing had happened to it; but I shall always be doubtful of the story until satisfactory vouchers of its truth, duly authenticated and sworn to, are produced.

About midday I noticed a cloud of dust rising in the prairie way off to my right, caused, as I at first supposed by a large body of troops in motion. I was traveling near the edge of the cane brake, both for greater security and for fear I might pass by without observing it, some road leading across. I therefore quickly concealed myself behind a small thicket, from whence I could see all that was passing on the prairie. Presently I saw issue from the cloud of dust a dense body of horses, which, on their nearer approach, I perceived were "uncurbed by bit and riderless." I supposed there were at least six or seven hundred in the drove. I saw they would pass within a short distance of the thicket where I was concealed, and when nearly opposite, I suddenly sprang out in full view of them and gave a loud whoop. They halted at once and with heads erect, stood for an instant looking at me in astonishment, then with the precision of a troop of cavalry, they wheeled about and went back in the direction they had come.

I continued on my way, and when I supposed I had traveled at least six or seven miles from where I had started, to my great joy I came to a plain road, running from the prairie into the brake. I felt confident it would take me through it, but when I followed it a hundred yards or so into the brake, it came to an abrupt termina-

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tion at a place where a large tree had been cut down and split into boards! There was not a vestige of a road beyond that point—nothing but almost solid walls of tall canes matted together with green briars and vines.

Sadly disappointed and dispirited, I retraced my steps to the prairie, and thence back towards—what I began now to regard as my permanent home, where I arrived a little after sunset, so “beat out” with my day’s tramp that I turned into my bed supperless, and slept like a log until roused at daylight by the crowing of my chickens and the squearling of my pigs. It may seem strange to some, that one accustomed to walking as I was, and after living upon the “fat of the land” as I had of late, should have been so much fatigued by a little tramp of twelve or fifteen miles—but that was precisely “what was the matter with Hanna.” After starving for so long a time, I had indulged too freely in “fried chicken;” and besides, walking through the woods and prairies is not like traveling on a well beaten road. In the former your progress is often necessarily slow and laborious on account of having to force your way through rank grass and many creeping vines, that are constantly entangling one’s legs, and occasionally tripping one up. Moreover the soles of your shoes soon become as slick as glass by rubbing on dry leaves and grass, so that you are frequently slipping backward instead of going forward.

Being determined to persevere in my attempt to find a road that would enable me to cross the brake, the next morning I shouldered my knapsack, and set out again in the direction I had taken two days previously when I made such a narrow escape from the lancers. Scout evidently seemed to think I was wandering about in a very aimless way, nevertheless he trotted along after me without asking any questions.

I traveled up the brake a mile or so beyond the point where I had turned back on the former occasion, examining closely every nook and bend for trails or roads. In this way I discovered one or two that had escaped my observation on my previous trip, but they “petered out” after going a short distance into the cane.

Finding no road or trail to answer my purpose, and night coming on, I encamped in some timber near the edge of the cane. A little after dark I heard a great many turkeys flying up to roost in the trees around my camp. The wolves howled incessantly, and once the sharp scream of a panther close by roused Scout from his slumber and he dashed off in the direction of the sound, but very soon came running back with his tail between his legs. It was evident he wanted my “moral support,” but I declined hunting panthers in the night with a carving knife. I felt no fear of them, however, in camp, as I had a blazing fire, which I took especial care to keep well supplied with fuel. I have been told that in India

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tigers have been known to come up to camp-fires and seize upon persons sleeping near them. This may be true, but there is no wild beast (with the exception perhaps of the grizzly bear) on the North American continent that will venture so near a blazing fire—at least I have never heard of an instance of the kind during the many years I have lived on the frontiers.

At daylight I was aroused from my slumbers by the clucking and gobbling of turkeys. There must have been several hundred of them upon the trees within fifty yards of where I was lying. One fat old fellow was sitting upon a limb not more than thirty feet from me, strutting and gobbling in the most impudent way. It seemed to me he knew I was particularly fond of roast turkey, and that he was "cutting up his didoes" for no other purpose than to tantalize me with the display of his goodly proportions. Even when I got up and walked towards him, he took no notice of me, until I threw a stick at him, when he uttered an exclamation something like "what!" and soared away to his feeding grounds.

After breakfast I continued my route along the edge of the brake. When I had gone about two miles, I noticed a house on the prairie near a small grove of timber, half a mile or so to my left, and I concluded to go out and examine the premises. The house was a small log cabin, surrounded by an enclosure containing perhaps a dozen or fifteen acres. It was poorly furnished and I saw nothing about the premises except some ducks and chickens.

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CHAPTER XX.

AS I did not know how long it might be before I should have a chance at "fried chicken" again, I determined to take toll out of the poultry about this house. With the assistance of Scout I soon caught and killed two fat pullets and a duck, which I tied on the outside of my knapsack. I then took a plain road running near the house and nearly parallel with the brake, and when I had gone about a mile I met with an adventure that terminated in the most singular and unaccountable manner. The road at that point was about a quarter of a mile from the brake. How it happened I did not see them sooner, I cannot imagine, unless I had fallen into what the negroes call a "fit of the mazes," but at any rate I suddenly found myself nearly opposite to two Mexican soldiers who were seated on the grass about forty paces to the left of the road. One of them was armed with a musket and the other with a lance, similar to those I had seen used by Mexican cavalry. Near them a horse, saddled, was grazing, and one of the soldiers held the end of his lariat in his hand. I have since thought the horse must have been lying down until I came near them, as otherwise I think I would have seen him sooner. As I have stated, it was a quarter of a mile at least to the nearest part of the brake, and the idea flashed across my mind that after all my narrow escapes I was certainly caught at last. Retreat to the brake I knew was impossible, as they could easily overtake me on the horse, and for a moment I stood irresolute not knowing what course to pursue. But the very hopelessness of the case produced a feeling of recklessness as to consequences, and I leisurely continued my way along the road; at the same time trying to look as unconcerned as possible and as if I didn't know (and didn't care) that a Mexican soldier was within five miles of me. All the while however, I was watching them closely. As I passed them, they made no movement except to turn their heads and gaze at me apparently in the utmost astonishment, which considering the figure I cut, just at that time, is not to be wondered at. There is not the slightest doubt that I presented a very singular and anomalous appearance. I was tanned by long exposure to sun and weather until I was nearly as dark as an Indian; my cap resembled a Turkish turban, the leather front having been long since carried away in some of its frequent encounters with green briars and other thorny shrubs; my hunting shirt was ragged and blackened with smoke, and my pantaloons, or what remained of them, were buttonless, and held up by a broad leather belt, from which a tin cup hung dangling on one side and two long carving knives on the other, and to complete this unique costume, my shoulders were surmounted by a portly knapsack, to which were tied the two pullets and the duck I had just killed. This "tout en-

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semble" of course accounts reasonably enough for the astonishment with which the soldiers gazed upon me as I passed, but still it does not satisfactorily explain their subsequent movements, especially as they could plainly see that with the exception of my two carving knives, I had no arms. However, they did not move until I had gone forty or fifty yards beyond them, when both suddenly rose to their feet and hastily mounted their horses, one behind the other. I of course supposed they intended to pursue me, but to my great wonder and astonishment as well as relief, they went off in the opposite direction, across the prairie, as fast as they could urge their horse on with whip and spur. The one mounted behind had a short heavy whip called a "quirt," and as far as I could see them distinctly, his quirt was incessantly and vigorously applied to the flanks of their steed, and every now and then I could see them looking back as if they expected me to pursue them.

What they took me for I am at loss to imagine, but if they had taken me for Old Nick himself I would not have quarreled with them on that score, in consideration of the expeditious manner in which they had left the field—not staying even to say "adios."

For fear however, I might not prove to be such a terrible object to other straggling parties of Mexicans whom I might possibly meet with on this road, I left it, and did not halt until I came to the brake. There I stopped to rest a while, and hold a "council of war" with Scout, as to what was to be done next. Scout, although he expressed no opinion on the subject, I know was strongly in favor of going back to the "flesh pots of Egypt," and finally we agreed to return to our old quarters. I had noticed an old axe there in one of the outhouses on the place, and I determined to set to work regularly and cut my way with it through the brake, if it took me a month to do it. It seemed very strange to me at the time, that the settlers on old Caney did not cut roads through it when they retreated before the Mexican army. But subsequently, when I mentioned the matter to one who lived on Caney when the settlers abandoned their homes there, he told me that all living on the south side had cut roads from their houses across the brake, but that in every instance they had some circuitous way to reach them, and that no sign of a road was visible on the edge of the brake. This statement was confirmed to some extent by the fact that no one, unless closely searching for it as I was, would have suspected the existence of a road where I found one.

In pursuance of the course I had determined to follow, after resting a while, Scout and I started back to our old quarters, and about an hour before sunset I crossed the strip of cane and the bridge of logs over the bayou and entered the little prairie in which my domicile was situated. As I was proceeding leisurely towards the house, it occurred to me that it might be well to examine again

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the north side of the prairie bordering the main brake which heretofore I had only partially done. With this intention I left the path I was following, and when I had gone a few hundred yards I came to a trail leading towards the brake along which the marks of wagon wheels were dimly visible. This I followed until it led me into an indentation in the brake, which was so narrow and so well concealed by bushes and came as to be barely perceptible at the distance of a few paces. Still following the traces of wagon wheels, I came on the farther side of this nook to a newly cut road wide enough for the passage of a wagon and team.

I was satisfied that at last I had found what I had been so long in search of, but in order to assure myself of the fact, I followed the road for nearly half a mile into the brake, and as it still ran on in the same direction I was convinced it would take me through. By this time the sun had set, and I concluded to return once more to my old quarters, and make an early start in the morning.

As I walked along my attention was suddenly drawn to two large black objects in the road a short distance ahead of me. I stopped a moment to ascertain what they were, and a I did so, Scout gave a low growl and retreated behind me. By the dim light that struggled through the overlapping canes I at length discovered that these black objects were two large bears, standing perfectly still in the road, and apparently waiting for us to come up. For an instant I thought of retreating, but on reflection, as I had never heard of any one being attacked by black bears unless wounded, I screwed up my courage (nearly breaking the screw-driver in the attempt) and resolved to pass them if I could. There was no chance to go around them, for the cane was so thick on both sides of the road, I might almost as well have tried to penetrate a solid wall. So I drew my longest carving knife, and boldly (apparently) advanced towards them. They stood perfectly still until I was within eight or ten feet of them, when they commenced growling, and looked so large and ferocious, and so bent on disputing my right of way, I felt more than half inclined (as Scout had done already) "to tuck my tail" and beat a hasty retreat. But I knew it was too late to turn back, and that any show of timidity would embolden them to attack if they had not intended doing so. I therefore continued to advance, and my apparent boldness seemed to daunt them a little (if they had only known how badly I was scared I am sure they would have seized me) and when almost near enough to have touched them, one of them sullenly drew off to one side of the road and one to the other, and Scout and I passed between them. As we went between them, they showed their white teeth and growled so fiercely that every instant I expected they would rush upon us, but they did not, nor did they attempt to follow us. All the while Scout kept close at my

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heels with his tail between his legs—the first and last time I ever saw him completely cowed.

It is asserted that the black bear never attacks a man, unless wounded or brought to bay, and I do not say positively that these two had any intention of making their supper on us, but to say the least of it, their bearing towards us was exceedingly suspicious; and besides, I thought they might just as well kill a fellow at once as to scare him to death. At any rate Scout and I congratulated ourselves (at least I know I did), when we were once more safe within the four walls of our house.

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CHAPTER XXI.

I rose early next morning to prepare as much provision for the road as I could conveniently carry. I cooked the duck and one of the pullets I had killed the day before (Scout and I had demolished the other for breakfast), and ground a gallon or so of meal on a steel mill. Besides these, my supplies consisted of five or six pounds of bacon, several pounds of sugar, two pounds of coffee parched and ground, some salt and pepper, and two bottles of honey. This, I thought, with care would last us eight or ten days, even if we found nothing on the road. I also had a tin cup for making coffee, and of course my two carving knives which I had sharpened on a whetstone were as keen as razors. For these I had made scabbards out of a piece of leather and sewed them to my belt. When ready to start I scribbled with a bit of charcoal the following "due bill" upon the wall of my sleeping apartment: "—— an American captured by the Mexicans but escaped from them at Goliad, is indebted to the proprietor of this house for one week's board and lodging and some extras, and will pay the same on demand." The extras referred to consisted of articles of clothing, pipe and tobacco, etc. This note has never been presented for payment, and I suppose it is barred now by the statute of limitation—nevertheless, I would cheerfully pay the principal now—but not the interest, for that would put the amount far above my present assets, and I should be compelled to take the benefit of the Bankrupt Act. Having thus settled my board bill on such easy terms, I shouldered my knapsack, stuck my carving knives into my belt, and followed by Scout, I took my way towards the road I had found the evening before.

Just as I was entering the brake, I turned to take a last look at the house that had been a heaven of rest to me after my wanderings in the wilderness, and I experienced a feeling of regret when I thought that in all probability I should never see it again. There I had truly been "the monarch of all I surveyed." I could loll upon the sofas—tumble up the beds—wipe the mud from my boots on the rugs and carpets—smoke tobacco (by no means of the best quality) in the drawing room—select my own "menu" from the well stored pantry and the poultry in the yard—and there was none to say me nay. Even now I look back with pleasant recollections to my sojourn in those comfortable quarters, for it was the only time I ever had complete and undisputed control of such an establishment. "Peace to its ashes" if, as is highly probable, it was subsequently burned by the Mexicans.

As I passed the place where I had encountered my doubtful friends the two bears the evening before, I noticed many of their tracks in the mud on the side of the road. They were very much

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like the tracks made by a bare-footed man (no pun intended for I detest puns), except that the heel part was as long as the toe. After traveling I suppose between three and four miles, crossing on the way a sluggish bayou, over which I "cooned it" on a fallen tree, to my great satisfaction I saw light ahead, and in a short time came to the open prairie.

At that day as I have before stated, nearly the whole of the bottoms on old Caney was covered by an unbroken cane brake sixty or seventy miles long and from three to five in width. This I had from others who were settlers in that portion of the country at an early day, and the statement is probably correct. The soil of this brake is exceedingly fertile, and the time will come no doubt, when it will be converted into one continuous sugar and cotton plantation. At the points where I saw it, it was a dense mass of cane, briars and vines, with here and there a scattering tree growing in their midst. Bears, panthers, wild hogs and other "varmints" were very numerous in it and along its borders.

About half a mile below the place where I came out into the open prairie, I saw a house near the bottom, and as I had made it a rule to search every one I passed for guns and ammunition, I started with that intention towards the one in question. I kept well under the shelter of some timber bordering the brake, to screen myself from the view of any one who might be about the premises. In this timber I struck a plain trail leading towards the house, which I took. I followed it perhaps a hundred yards or so, when as I turned a short bend in the path, I caught sight of a Mexican soldier, with his gun on his shoulder, walking rapidly towards me. Luckily a dense growth of bushes bordered the path at the point where I then was, and although I had but little hope the Mexican had not seen me, I instantly sprang into the bushes and laid down among them. Scout, who evidently had not forgotten the chocking I gave him on a previous occasion, quickly followed me, and took his station by my side. It seems, however, the Mexican did notice us, for he came on, and passed within six feet of us without halting. I could almost have touched him with my longest carving knife, and if he had been a little weakly chap I think I would have been tempted to spring suddenly upon him as he passed and give him a tussle for his gun, but he was a big strapping fellow, and I knew I would have no chance of coming off winner in a hand to hand encounter with him, even if I had not been hampered with a heavy knapsack, and other "impedimenta." I concluded therefore that "discretion was the better part of valor," and did not move until he was hidden from my view by a turn of the path.

As it was evident he came from the house I had seen, and as I thought it highly probable there were "more of the same sort"

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there, I gave up the idea of searching it for guns, for fear I might find more of them there than was desirable; so I gave it a wide berth, and striking off through the woods to the right I came out again to the prairie two or three miles below.

The day was cloudy and dark, and I couldn't see the timber on the opposite side; consequently I could form no idea of its extent. Besides (having made a late start on account of being delayed in preparing provisions for the road), the sun was by this time getting pretty low, and I thought it best to encamp for the night and start anew in the morning.

In a little open space just within the brake, separated from the prairie by a very narrow strip of cane I pitched my camp; in other words, I pulled off my knapsack, and streached myself upon a bed of dry grass which I had cut with a knife. It was too early to cook supper, and as I had no dread of wild beasts till dark, I did not start a fire, and very fortunate it was for me I had not done so. I was just falling into a doze, when Scout gave a low growl and at the same moment I heard the tramping of horses' hoofs. I looked through an opening in the strip of cane between me and the prairie and saw five or six Indians who were driving a number of horses, coming along the edge of the brake. Just as they were opposite to the spot where Scout and I were lying, two of the horses broke away from the "caballada," ran through the strip of cane and nearly over us. One of the Indians started after them, and was crossing the strip of cane, when the two runaways seeing Scout and I lying upon the ground, suddenly wheeled and ran back to the prairie, and the Indian turned also and followed them. If he had come six feet further he must inevitably have seen us. As it was he did not discover us, and the Indians and their drove of horses soon passed out of sight.

These two "close calls" both occurring the same day, convinced me that I had but little chance to make my way safely through a country swarming with roving bands of Mexicans and Indians; and yet, although I passed their recent encampments at several places, I never saw an Indian afterwards, nor a Mexican, except some squads of cavalry a long way off on the prairie.

During the night I heard bears crashing through the cane, and splashing in the water of the pool near which I was encamped. The number of bears at that day on old Caney was so great I cannot imagine how the settlers there managed to raise hogs unless they kept them constantly penned up. The next morning I saw many of their tracks on the edge of the pool, where they had been digging up some kind of plant with a bulbous root.

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE next morning as soon as I had eaten breakfast and Scout had "cleaned up" the fragments, I set off towards a long line of timber that was just barely visible on the farther side of the prairie. Not a great while after I had started I noticed a long way off to the west, a column of smoke rising up, which I supposed indicated an encampment of Mexicans or Indians in that quarter. When I had traveled perhaps three or four miles, I observed that this smoke was increasing rapidly in volume and extent, and that it appeared to be approaching the direction I was going. Then, for the first time it occurred to me that the prairie was on fire, and I began to be seriously apprehensive that the fire might overtake me before I could reach the timber. The grass of the last season's growth was from fifteen to eighteen inches in height, and as dry as tinder, and it seemed very probable, with the stiff breeze blowing at the time, that the fire would overtake me before I could gain the opposite side of the prairie, still five or six miles distant. I hurried on as fast as I could, but before I had gone two miles further, I was convinced that escape by flight was impossible. I had heard old frontiersmen say, that the only thing to be done in a case of this kind, was to "fight fire with fire." I took my flint and steel from my pocket, ignited some tinder which I wrapped in a wisp of dry grass, and swinging it quickly backwards and forwards in my hand, it was soon in a blaze. With this I set fire to the grass ahead of me, and in a few moments I had the satisfaction of seeing my counter fire sweeping the grass that grew in the direction I was going.

By this time the wall of fire extending in a long line across the prairie behind me, was swiftly moving towards me. Already I could see bright tongues of flame flashing out at intervals through the dense column of smoke, and a dull continuous roar, like the distant beating of surf on a rock bound shore, was distinctly audible. Hundreds of deer, antelope and other animals came scampering by me in the wildest terror, and numerous vultures and hawks were seen hovering over the smoke, and occasionally pouncing down upon rabbits and other small animals, roused from their lair by the advancing flames. The nearer it came the faster it seemed to come, and I could see blazing tufts of grass borne along by the wind setting fire to the prairie sometimes fifty or a hundred yards ahead of the main fire. But by the time it had reached the place where I had set my counter fire going, the grass for several hundred yards was burnt off, and of course the fire was arrested there for want of fuel. I had nothing to do but follow the track of the fire I had started, which cleared the way before me as I went, and rendered walking much less fatiguing than it otherwise would have been

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—verifying the truth of the old saying “that it is an ill wind that blows no good.”

In about two hours after I had set my counter fire going, I came to the outskirts of the timber for which I had been steering, and through which I continued my course until I was stopped by a deep bayou. On the bank of this bayou, in a little open space not twenty feet square, I pitched my camp, and from the fallen trees around I collected fuel enough to keep my fire going all night. There I soon prepared a meal from the provisions I had in my knapsack, to which I and Scout did ample justice as we had not tasted food since early in the morning. As it was still several hours till night, I employed myself in repairing my dilapidated wardrobe with a needle and some thread I had found in my house on Old Caney.

Nothing occurred to disturb my slumbers during the night. The next morning after breakfast I shouldered my knapsack and started again. The bayou on which I had camped, though the current was very strong, looked so narrow I thought I could easily swim it without taking off my knapsack; so I plunged in at once, but unfortunately when I had about reached the middle of the stream, one of the straps that held it in position gave way, and in an instant the rapid current twisted it around my neck, and I went down with it like a stone to the bottom. I exerted myself to the utmost to free myself from it but without success, until I thought of my carving knives. With great difficulty I drew one of them from the scabbard (it seemed to me that everything about me was tangled up) and cut the strap that fastened the knapsack around my neck. The moment I was freed from it I rose to the surface, puffing and blowing like a porpoise, and half strangled with the water I had swallowed much against my will, for I was not in the least thirsty. Scout having no knapsack to encumber him, had already reached the opposite shore, and was running up and down the bank, whining most dolorously, and showing plainly his anxious concern for my safety. I quickly gained the shore myself after coming to the surface, but alas! I was compelled to leave my precious knapsack which contained our whole supply of provisions, at the bottom of the bayou. However, I was very glad to get out of the scrape as well as I had done.

The first thing I did after reaching the shore, was to examine the condition of my tinder, and I was glad to find that but little water penetrated the greased cloth in which it was wrapped. I took it out and spread it in the sunshine, so that what little moisture it had imbibed might evaporate. If I had lost my tinder as well as my provisions, I would have been in a truly pitiable condition.

When I had partially dried my clothes, I set out again in my usual direction, which led me for some distance through a thick

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growth of underbrush, from which I finally emerged into open post oak woods. I went on through these until nearly sunset, when the howling of wolves warned me that it was time to select a suitable place to encamp. I chose a spot in a thick grove on the margin of a pond. There I started a fire, and as I had to go to bed supperless, I determined that at any rate my bed should be a good one. With one of my carving knives I cut a quantity of long dry grass, which I spread before the fire, on which I and Scout after the mishaps and fatigues of the day slept soundly till morning.

As soon as it was daylight, as I had no breakfast to cook and eat, I was on my way again, and in a little while I came to a prairie, on the farther side of which I saw a forest and a large lake near it. Towards this lake and forest I steered my course, but after traveling some distance, I was astonished to find that apparently they were as far off as when I first saw them. Whilst I was wondering at this, I noticed that the lake and forest were each moment growing more indistinct, and at length they vanished altogether, and in their place nothing was visible but the level expanse of the open prairie. I knew then that the appearance of this lake and woods was an optical illusion termed a "mirage," produced by some peculiar state of the atmosphere. I have frequently seen them since on the plains in the west, and on several occasions have been cruelly tantalized when suffering from thirst, by the sight of lakes that disappeared before I could reach them.

After traveling a while longer, I saw some distance ahead of me a grove, and still further on a forest was dimly visible. At first I thought it probable that these also were only the ghosts of a grove and forest, and that they too would disappear and give me the slip, but they proved to be the "genuine articles." To this forest I steered my course, guided by the intervening grove. I saw several squads of Mexican cavalry on the way, but they did not come near me, and I avoided observation, simply by lying down on the ground, until they had passed by. But what astonished me much was, that these squads were all traveling in a disorderly manner towards the west. It soon occurred to me, however, that the Mexican army must have met somewhere with a signal defeat, and that those I saw were straggling detachments from their routed forces. I have no doubt this supposition was correct, for the battle of San Jacinto, in which Santa Anna was taken prisoner, was fought and won by the Texans under Gen. Houston, a few days previously.

About noon, I came to the grove that had served me as a landmark to guide me on my course, and feeling somewhat fatigued, I laid down just outside of it to rest a while. I had been there but a few moments when I had practical evidence that the vast distance at which the buzzard is said to see a carcass on the ground, had not been exaggerated. When I laid down not a buzzard was in

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sight, although I had an unbroken view for miles in every direction, but in less than five minutes, half a dozen of them were wheeling and circling above my head, and coming lower and lower, evidently for the purpose of ascertaining if Scout and I had been killed long enough to suit their fastidious taste. "My friends," said I, "on this occasion you are a little too 'previous'—you have come very near several times having the satisfaction of picking my bones, but to prove to you that I am not as yet a fit subject for a 'post mortem' feast, I'll move on." The first movement I made satisfied them on that point, and they departed as quickly as they had come.

Continuing my course, about sun set I came to a deep and rapid stream, which I know now was the San Bernard, and I encamped for the night on the bank. By this time I was suffering much from hunger, but there was nothing in camp to eat, and I and Scout were compelled to satisfy the cravings of our appetites as well as we could, by going to sleep. The poet calls sleep "tired nature's sweet restorer," and under ordinary circumstances, no doubt there is some truth as well as poetry in the saying, but when a fellow has had nothing to eat for several days, and his bed is the naked ground, sleep as a restorer isn't a marked success—at least I was just as tired and hungry when I woke up the next morning as I was when I laid down. However, I was in hopes that I might find a settlement on the other side of the river where something to eat could be had, and without any preparation except simply tying my cap on my head securely to keep my precious tinder from getting wet, I plunged into the turbid stream closely followed by Scout. The water was very cold, but I soon crossed over and ascended the bank that rose up almost perpendicularly thirty or forty feet on that side of the stream.

When I got to the top of the bluff, I discovered a house a few hundred yards above me, to which I turned my course. As it was all open prairie on that side of the river except a few scattering groves, I had a good chance to reconnoitre the premises before approaching them, and seeing nothing to indicate that the house was occupied, I went up. It proved to be a single log cabin, in rather a dilapidated condition, and had been ransacked by some plundering party of Mexicans who had taken or destroyed any provisions that might have been there, except a handful of corn I found in a barrel. As I was thoroughly chilled after swimming the river, I concluded I would build a fire in the chimney for the double purpose of drying my clothes and parching the corn I had found.

There was but one door and one window to the cabin, both on the same side, and while I was busily engaged in parching corn, my attention was drawn to a grating sound in the direction of the window, and turning to look, I saw the muzzle of a gun protruding through it. But Scout had noticed it, too, and giving a savage

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growl, he sprang at one bound through the window, and at the same instant almost I heard some one rip out an oath in good, King's English, and exclaiming "come take your dog off," in such choking accents as convinced me there was urgent need of haste. I ran out immediately, and with some difficulty forced Scout to let go the grip he had taken upon a thick wollen comforter, which fortunately for him, my visitor had wrapped around his neck.

After he had somewhat recovered from the surprise and alarm into which the unexpected onset of Scout had thrown him, he asked me where I was from, and how I came to be out there all alone among the Mexicans and Indians. When I had satisfied him on this point, he told me that he and a Capt. D—— were out on a spying expedition, and seeing a smoke coming out of the cabin chimney where I was carrying on my culinary operations, they had come to the conclusion that a party of Mexicans had halted there. After a consultation as to the best mode of proceeding, it was determined that Capt. D—— should remain with the horses under cover a grove a few hundred yards from the cabin, whilst his companion, Mr. H——, should cautiously approach it on foot, and ascertain the strength of the party within. If too strong for them to contend with, he was to fire upon them through the door or window and then make his retreat as fast as possible to the grove where he had left Capt. D—— and the horses. But in arranging this programme, they did not consult Scout, who revenged himself in the manner I have stated. After giving me this information and telling me that the Texans had whipped the Mexicans at San Jacinto, etc., Mr. H—— gave a whoop (the preconcerted signal for Capt. D—— to come on), and in a few moments he rode up, leading H——'s horse and another one, which to my great satisfaction I found was well packed with provisions. As I have stated, I already had a fire under way, and in a little while a pot of coffee was simmering on it, and a haversack of eatables, biscuits, potatoes, cold ham, etc., was spread upon the floor. Those biscuits! I shall never forget them! None of your little thin flimsy affairs, such as are usually seen on fashionable tables, but good solid fat fellows, each as big as a saucer, and with dark colored spots in the center, where the "shortening" had settled in the process of baking.

When the coffee was ready I was invited to "pitch in," which I did promptly and without any pressing, after casting a contemptuous look towards the little pile of parched corn on the hearth, which I had previously prepared for my breakfast.

As well as I remember, I think I was dealing with my fifth biscuit, and was looking longingly toward the sixth, when Capt. D—— mildly suggested that in his opinion I had better "knock off" for a while for fear of consequences. To this I made no reply except to seize the sixth biscuit, and while I was disposing of that,

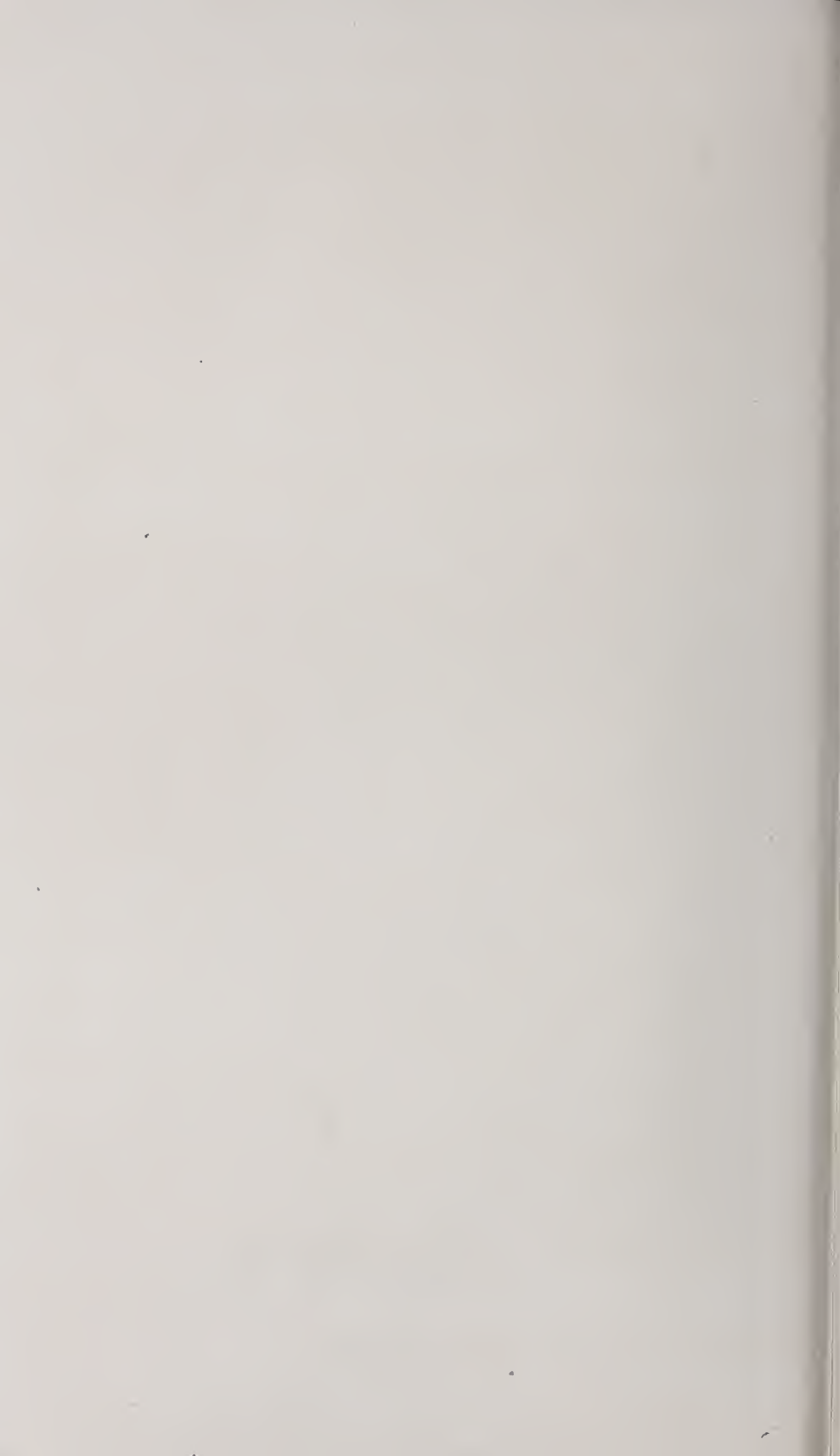
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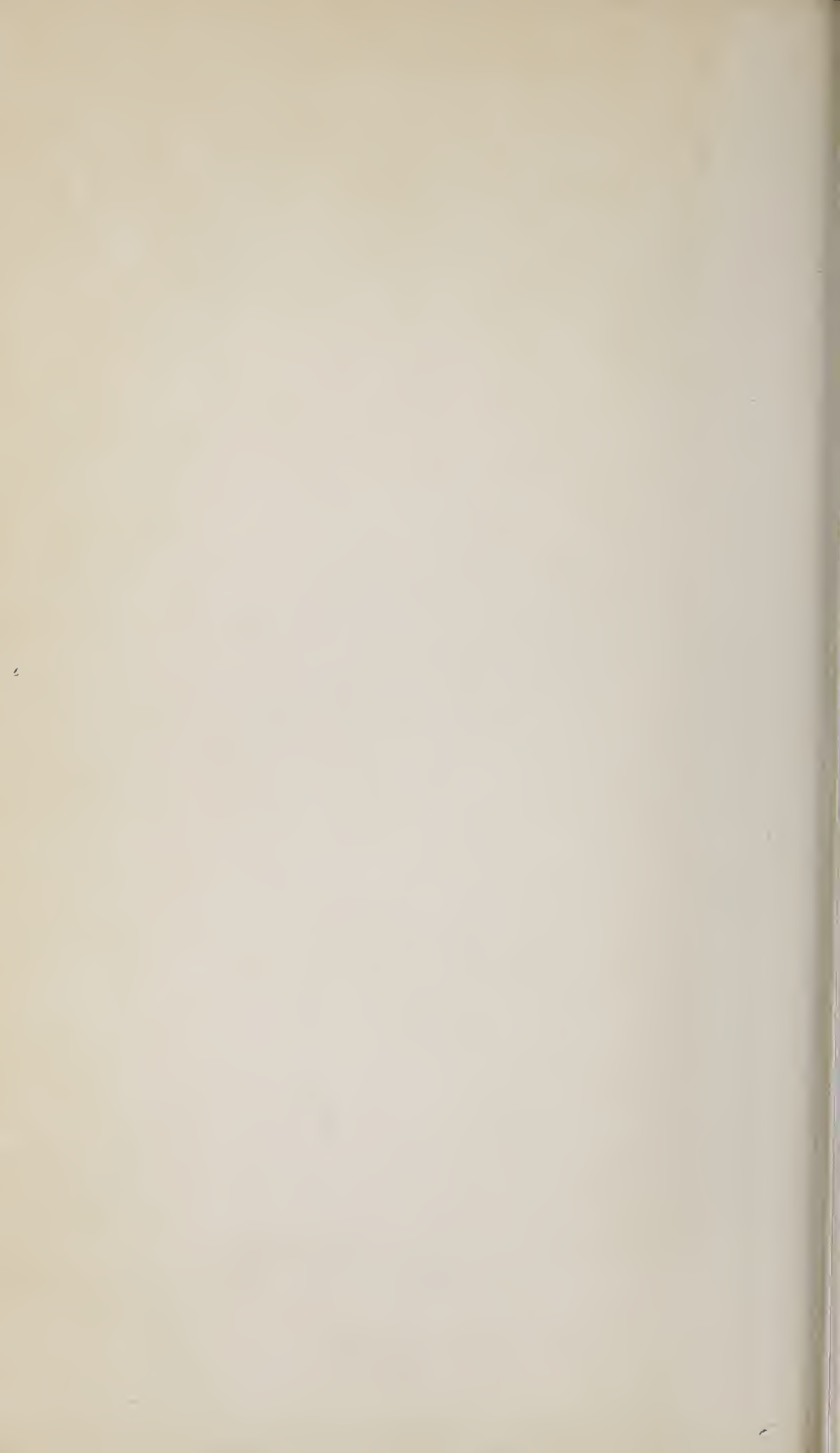
Capt. D—— expeditiously cleared the board, and deposited the remainder of the provisions in the haversack. We then mounted the horses (the pack animal having been turned over to me) and in a day or so we reached the Brazos, where a portion of the Texan army was encamped.

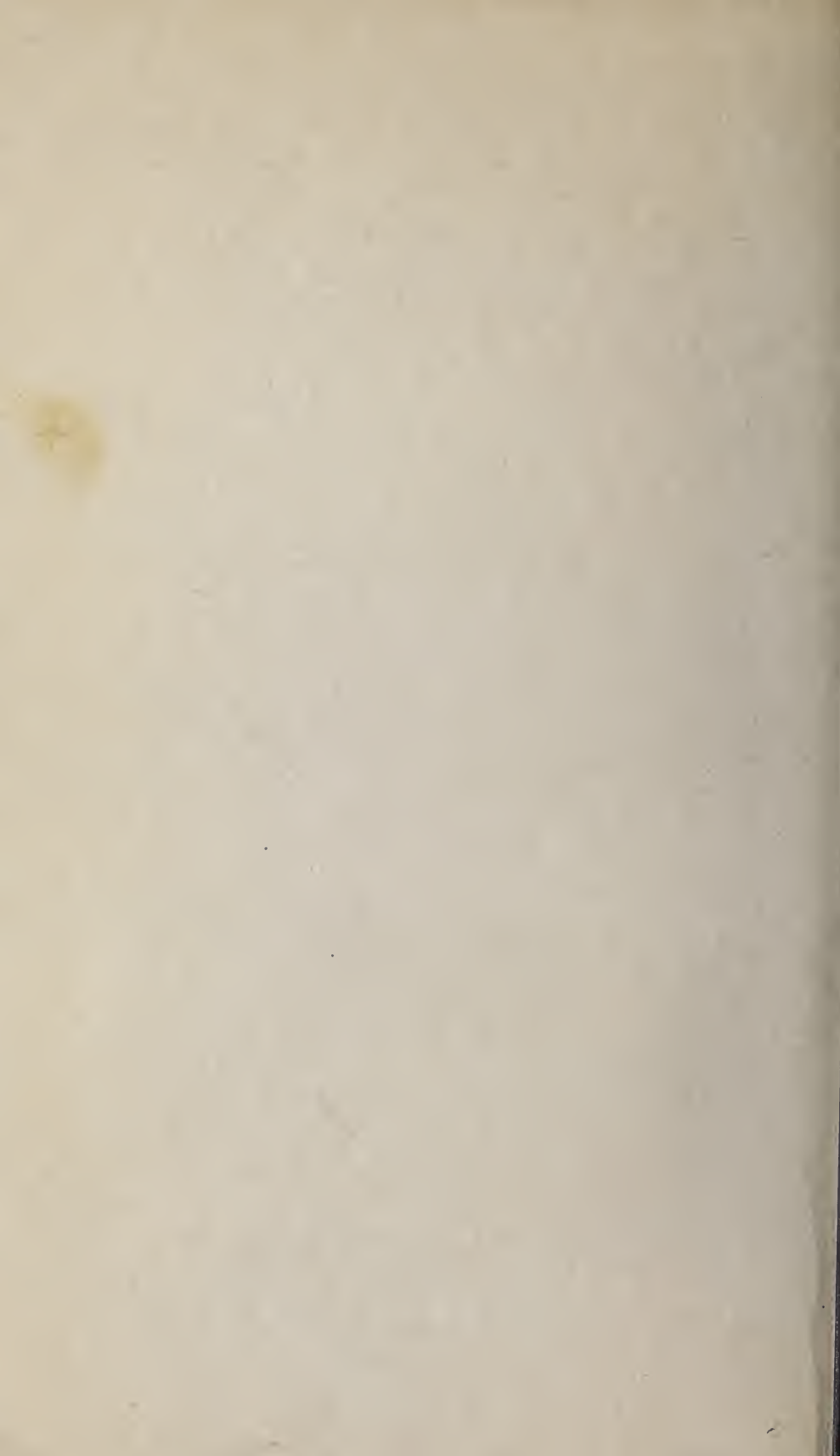
I have nothing further to add, except that when I left for the "States" a month or so subsequently, finding it impossible, owing to the crowded condition of the schooner in which I sailed to take Scout with me, I gave him to my friend H——, who promised me he should be well taken care of. Many years afterwards I met with H—— at Austin, and he told me that Scout lived to a good old age, and died the respected progenitor of a breed of dogs that were highly prized for their valuable qualities.

[THE END.]

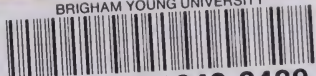








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